

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + Refrain from automated querying Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

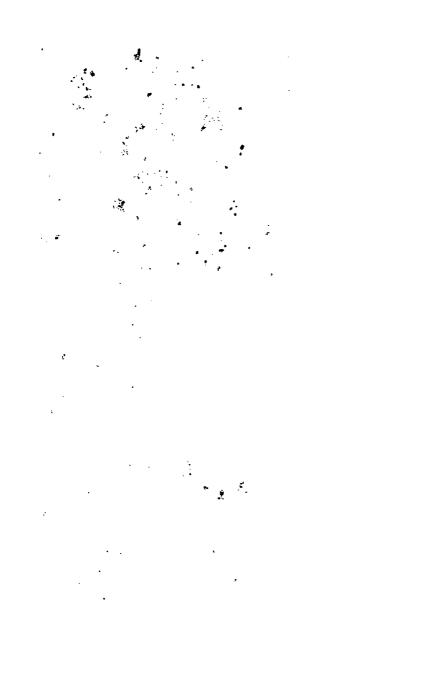
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

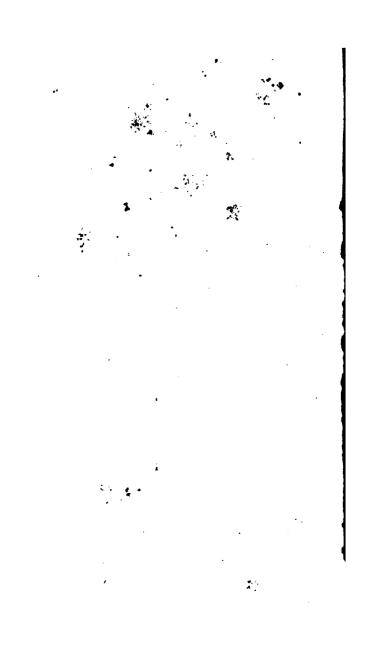




600096446Z









THE GOSPEL STORY.
VOL. I.



THE

GOSPEL STORY.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE

FOUR GOSPELS,

CONTAINING THE NARRATIVE OF

OUR BLESSED LORD'S LIFE AND MINISTRY.



JOHN HODGES, 47, BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, LONDON. 1871.

101. i. 108.

MINITARIOFFICE

-



	1	PAGE
	Introduction	I
I.	In the beginning—God	5
2.	The Holy Trinity	7
3.	Creation; the Holy Angels	9
4.	The Creation of the World and of Man.	ΙI
5.	Adam in Paradise . ;	14
6.	Adam and Eve; Christ and His Church	16
7.	Man's free Will	18
8.	The Temptation and the Fall	20
9.	The Punishment; Man's Fallen State	23
10.	The Promise of a Redeemer	25
II.	Sacrifice	27
I 2.	The World before the Flood	29
13.	The Flood; the Ark; the Covenant with	
	Noah	31
14.	Abraham and the Promise	33
15.	Israel in Egypt; the Passover	36
16.	Moses, and the going forth out of Egypt	38
17.	The Tabernacle and the Sacrifices	40
18.	The Church in the Wilderness	42
19.	The Prophets	44
20.	The Chosen Nation	47
21.	The Gospel in the Old Testament	40

22.	God the Son, the Saviour from the be-
	ginning
23.	The Fulness of time
24.	The Angel appears to Zacharias .
25.	The Angelical Salutation
2б.	The Annunciation
27.	Mary visiting Elizabeth :
28.	The Song of the Blessed Virgin
29.	The Birth of John the Baptist
30.	The Song of Zacharias
3 I.	The Angel appearing to Joseph
32.	The Birth of Jesus Christ
33.	The Mystery of the Incarnation .
34.	The Angels and the Shepherds
35.	The Circumcision of Jesus
36.	The Name of Jesus
37.	The Earthly descent of Jesus
38.	The Coming of the Wise Men .
39.	The Purification and Presentation .
40.	The Song of Simeon
41.	Anna
42.	The Flight into Egypt
43.	The Holy Innocents
44.	The Childhood of Fesus
45.	Jesus with the Doctors in the Temple
46.	The Subject life at Nazareth
47.	The Hidden life at Nazareth .
48.	The Life of labour at Nazareth .
49.	The Meditation
50.	The Voice in the Wilderness

				LVOF
51.	The Preaching of Repentance .		•	117
52.	The Preaching of simple duties.	•		119
53-	The Witness to Christ		•	122
54.	The Baptism of Jesus	•		124
55.	Jesus in the Wilderness			126
56.	Jesus tempted	•		128
57.	Jesus tempted to spiritual pride .		•	130
58.	Jesus tempted to worldly glory .			133
59.	The Devil and his works			235
60.	The Ministry of the Holy Angels			137
61.	The Witness of John the Baptist			139
62.	Andrew and John follow Jesus			141
63.	Peter is brought to Jesus			143
64.	Nathanael			145
65.	The Marriage at Cana			147
66.	Christian rejoicing			149
67.	Christ's glory manifested in miracles			152
68.	The Teaching of Miracles			154
69.	The Cleansing of the Temple			157
70.	Reverence for Holy Places .			159
7 I.	Nicodemus			161
72.	Fesus our Teacher			164
73.	The Sacrament of the New Birth.			166
74.	The Teaching of Heavenly things			168
? 5.	Fesus in the land of Judæa			17C
76.	Fohn before Herod			173
77.	Fesus at Facob's Well			175
78.	The Woman of Samaria			177
79.	The Living Water			179
80.	The Workings of Crass	_		18:

		FAC
81.	The True Worshipper	18.
82.	The Fields white for Harvest	184
83.	The Fewish Nobleman	18 ≥
84.	The Synagogue	190
85.	The Sermon at Nazareth	193
86.	Fesus rejected at Nazareth	195
87.	The Call of four disciples	197
88.	Jesus at Capernaum	199
89.	Fesus alone and praying	202
90.	Galilee	204
91.	The Mount of Blessing	206
92.	The Poor in spirit	209
93.	The Mourners	21 1
94.	The Meek	213
95.	The Hungry and Thirsty	215
96.	The Merciful	217
97.	The Pure in heart	220
98.	The Peacemakers	22 2
99.	The Persecuted	224
100.	Fesus the Blessed above all	226
oı.	The Lights of the world	229
102.	The inner Law; Forgiveness	23 I
103.	The Law of the Seventh Commandment	23 3
104.	The Law of the Ninth Commandment	235
105.	Almsgiving	238
юб.	Prayer	240
107.	The Mystery of Prayer	24 2
ı08 .	Forms of prayer	244
109.	Our Father in Heaven	24б
<i>10.</i>	Hallowed be Thy Name	248

ı						•		PAGE
I	, ,		•		•		•	250
I.	•							252
13	3. Our daily Bread							254
14	. Forgive us our debts .	•						257
15	4	on			•			259
16.	Deliver us from Evil							261
7.	The Doxology							263
8.	Fasting							266
) .	The divided mind .						•	269
2	Judging others							27 I
I.	Obedience the companion of	ff	ra	yer	٠.			273
Ļ	Profession without practic	ce		•				276
	The Draught of Fishes.							278
	The Leper cleansed .							280
	The Palsied man healed							283
į	The Son of Man .							285
•	The Call of Matthew .							287
	The Pool of Bethesda							290
	The Jews offended .							292
	Jesus equal with God							294
	The witnesses to Jesus.							297
	The Sabbath and its oblig	rat	ion	s				299
	Jesus ministering at the	Sec	r o	f	Ga	lile	e.	301
	The Twelve Apostles Ord							303
	The Sermon on the Plain							306
,	The Centurion's Servant							308
,	The Widow of Nain							310
,	The Message from John	in	pri	soi	r			312
	The Children in the Mark	ket	pl	ace	•			315
	Earthly glory; Heavenly							317

141.	The Woman that was a Sinner		
142.	The Two Debtors		
143.	The Blind and Dumb		
144.	The Pharisees rebuked		
145.	Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost		
146.	Sins of Speech		
İ47.	The Sign of Fonas		
148.	The Inward Light		
149.	Falling back		
150.	The Lord's Mother and Brethren.		
151.	The Rich Fool	•	
152.	Watching and Repentance		
153.	The Barren Figtree		
154.	Parables. The Sower		
155.	The Sower		
156.	The Secret Growth; the Mustard S	eed	;
	the Leaven		
157.	The Wheat and the Tares .	•	
158.	The Hid Treasure		
159.	The Seeing and the Blinded .		
160.	The Would-be Disciples		
16 1.	The Tempest stilled		
162.	The Demoniacs among the Gadaren	es	
1б3.	The Feast at Levi's House		
164.	The Raising of Jairus' daughter.		
165.	The Issue of Blood Stanched .	•	



INTRODUCTION.

HE Gospel Story—the good tidings of great joy which is to all people—can mean nothing less than the whole story of God's love to man. The foremost figure in that story is Jesus, the Son of God, very God and very man, born of the Virgin Mary for us men and for our salvation. The crowning act of that story is the death of Jesus upon the Cross for us. Herein God tommendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. v. 8. But that is not the whole of the story. We must begin earlier, from the very beginning of the Divine revelation, with the eternal love and wisdom of God. The glad tidings of great joy can mean nothing less than the assurance that God hath

loved us with an everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3 that He hath created us for His glory, Isa. xliii. 7 that after our disobedience He hath given His dear Son to take our nature upon Him, to teach us by His word and example, and to die for us upon the Cross, as the propitiation for our sins in order to reconcile us to His Father. Ephes. ii. 16. And the Gospel Story does not end with the Cross. It carries us upwards to the heavenly Altar. It tells of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, that He should, as our Great High Priest for ever, Heb vi. 20, in heaven itself and in the presence of God offer His sacrifice for sins for ever, Heb. x. 12 and make His unceasing intercession for us. I tells of the giving of the Holy Ghost, the Teacher Comforter, and Sanctifier, of that Holy Spirit's in dwelling and work in the Church, of the grace of Baptism and Confirmation, of the preaching of th Word and the Ministry of Reconciliation, 2 Co. v. 18: of the grace and power of Holy Orders b which men compassed with infirmity are yet mad able ministers of the new covenant, 2 Cor. iii. of that highest and deepest of mysteries, the Hol Communion Service, in which by the word

. Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, the Church militant here on earth shews forth her Lord's death until His coming again, I Cor. xi. 26, joining with Him, and pleading under the forms of bread and wine, that sacrifice which He pleads in the heavenly Holy of Holies, in His own wounded and glorious Body. It tells that in these ame holy mysteries we Christians verily and indeed receive and eat our Saviour's Body and Blood, that we are very members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Ephes. v. 30. that by this union with Him we are strengthened and restored, and preserved body and soul unto everlasting life; and that throughout our mortal pilgrimage His Holy Spirit will in all things direct and rule our hearts with enlightening, sanctifying, strengthening grace, until, being more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us and given Himself for us, we attain unto those heavenly mansions, and the fulness of joy which God hath prepared for them that love Him. It tells of the time when all sin and all sorrow shall have ceased, when there shall be no more divisions among us, but all, in one faith in the One Lord, shall be united in the one body, one flock under the One Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Less than this is not the Gospel Story.

And to understand this we must go back to the beginning, to God's foreknowledge and love for us, even before He had created us, to the creation and the fall, to the promise of a Saviour; to the Holy Spirit's constant striving with sinners; to the preparation for the better day by sacrifice and type by covenant and promise, by the law and the prophets, until in the fulness of time God sent forth. His Son, born of a woman, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal. iv. 5.



PART I.

GOD AND CREATION.

1. In the beginning—GOD. Gen. i. 1; St. John i. 1.

N the beginning—God: We must go back as far as this if we wish to know the Gospel Story from its very beginning. For although the Good Tidings were not fully declared to the world until the WORD was made flesh, the Wisdom and the Love made known to us in those Good Tidings are from all Eternity. We go back

in thought before ever the earth and the world

were made, Psalm xc. 2, and we find GoD.

And what is GOD?

That Sacred Awful Name contains within it more than any other word. He who says "God" speaks of Him who is before all Time, and throughout all space, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, whose Wisdom has fore-ordained all things, whose Will has created all, whose Power rules all, whose Glory is above all. It is easier to say what God is not than to explain all that He is. We lose ourselves in the thought of God. Just as the eye

which is lifted up to the noonday sun in its full glory, turns away dazzled and blinded, so the eye of our soul is dazzled and blinded in the thought of the full glory of God. God is in every way perfect in His own Eternal Life and Glory. He needed not to create anything in order to increase His happiness. After all, we can say little more than that God is God, the Great Eternal Spirit, the Cause and Creator of all things, that His Name comprehends in it all that is mighty, glorious and perfect; and that—this follows as a matter of course—the Lord our God is One. Deut. vi. 4.

Moreover God is all Holy. He is all Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth. And, best of and for us! God is Love.

What an awful thought is this Eternal, Almighty, all-wise, all-holy, all-perfect Life of God in Heaven, with no worlds yet created, no angels, nothing but God! We cannot grasp it. We should have been afraid of His greatness if He had not drawn us to Him by those other blessed words, God is LOVE. But now, even while we fear Him, we may rejoice.

It is good for us to think upon God in His awful existence, upon God as He is. He is so good to us that we often speak and act as if God could not be without us, as if He were only a part of this great world of ours, as if He had been wanting something until He had a world to care for. That is bringing God down to mankind, down

to earth. No, God needed us not, though we could not be without Him. If there were no men, no world, no Angels, God would still be the same, still be God for ever and ever, into the everlasting ages. His glory is as perfect without us as with us. And we His creatures, sinful creatures, have just strength to utter, "I believe in God," and then we must hide our faces, and adore Him in silent and reverent love.

2. The Holy Trinity. St. John i. 1; St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

HE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not to be found only in the New Testament. We must go back again to the Eternal years, to the earliest mystery of Godliness, I Tim. iii. 16, the Life and Love of the HOLY, BLESSED AND GLORIOUS TRINITY, three PERSONS and One GOD.

Great indeed is the mystery of Godliness. I believe in One God. So saith the Creed; for God is One. And at the same time we must say, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, our Creator; God, the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer; God, the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier; Three Persons and yet One God. Who can fully understand this doctrine of the Trinity in Unity? We cannot. But we take it in faith, as revealed to us in the Scripture, as taught always by the Church. And let us be thankful for the wise and prudent words

of the old Saints which the Church has kept for us, hallowed by the use of many hundred years, such as the Nicene Creed, and the Creed of St. Athanasius; stern and safe barriers against the false doctrines, the dishonouring ideas of God, which human pride and foolishness have tried to put in the place of the faith once delivered unto the saints. If we do not believe rightly in God we cannot be said to believe in Him at all.

The saints of the Old Covenant were permitted to see shadows and glimpses of this wonderful truth. The blessing upon the children of Israel was threefold, Numb. vi. 24–26; threefold the song of the Seraphim heard by Isaiah, Isaiah vi. 3. But far more clearly do we Christians read it in St. John's opening words, The Word was with God, and the Word was God; and in the One Name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, into which all believers were to be baptized. With an even brighter light the life and glory, the work and love of each Person of the Blessed Three in One is set forth in the letters of the Apostles, and in the Book of the Revelation.

This therefore is the Life of God in Three Persons from all eternity, a life of mutual fellowship, contemplation, joy, and love. This is the first part of the mystery of Godliness. The Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God. And yet not three Gods, but ONE GOD. With this truth clearly held we can understand the wisdom and

counsel and love of that second part which is the completion of the first, namely, the Incarnation of the Word. I Tim. iii. 18. According to the will and gift of God the Father, and by the operation of God the Holy Ghost, God the Son was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary, His Mother. This is the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God. Ephes. iii. 10. God the Son was fore-ordained before the Creation of the world, I St. Itter i. 20, to be also the Son of Man.

This is the eternal life, and love, and counsel, of the Blessed Trinity in Unity. Countless worlds there are in the universe of God; millions and millions of faultless creatures adoring at His footstool. Yet such thought had God for our world, and for us men, ere He spake the word, and we were made.

3. Creation; the Holy Angels. Gen. i. 1; Colos. i. 16-17; Rev. v. 11-14.

ORDS fail us when we speak of the Eternal Being of the Blessed Trinity. And how shall we describe the beginning of Crea-

tion—when it was? For there was no time yet; only eternity; no creature yet; only God. In that eternity—so only can we express it—Creation was begun. In the beginning God created the Heavens and all the powers therein—the pure Spirits which stand before His throne in their several ranks and orders. Their blessed employments are to wait upon

God, to minister before Him in adoring worship. reveal His will, to do His pleasure, and to be 1 guardians and aids of the heirs of salvation. Hel 12. They are the first, and purest, and most gloric of God's creatures, and their delight is in the kno ledge, and love, and service of their Maker. the creation of Adam the morning stars sang gether, and all the Sons of God-that is, the H-Angels-shouted for joy. Job xxxviii. 7. Th desire to look into the mystery of our salvati 1 St. Peter i. 12, and the manifold wisdom of C which is made known to them by the Church earth. Yes, the Angels learn more and more God by watching us. They love us, and are anxiabout our souls. They rejoice over one sinner t repenteth. We cannot put any limits to their wat ful care and deliverance of us. And, although tl are so much greater than we are, so much above -for they have never sinned—they are our fell servants. They worship God in Heaven while worship Him on earth. They are present with in our worship, especially when we plead the Sa fice of the Death of the Lamb of God in the Sac ment of the Altar; as the Church sings, "Theref with Angels and Archangels, and with all the co pany of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glori Name." Com. Service, Rev. v. 8; viii. 3-4.

And not only do we believe that the Holy Ang take their part in the worship of the whole Chur and come from Heaven on errands of love;

mercy to the children of men, but we believe further that our Father appoints to each of us a Guardian Angel, to be with us all our life long, to defend us in all dangers of body and soul, and to carry our departed spirit, if we die in a state of grace, into the blessed Paradise of them that sleep in Jesus.

This was now the glory of God before the first man was made a living soul. God dwelt in the eternal glory; around Him stood the Seraphim and all these holy Spirits. Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. Daniel vii. 10. What a glorious vision! One mind as yet in all created things, one love, one obedience, one delight!

And yet even here sin entered. For truly to love and serve God the creature must *choose* His will before all things. And if the creature is to make choice, he must be free to choose, or to refuse. And some of the Angels kept not their first estate, but rebelled against God, and were cast out. St. Jude. 6. There were empty thrones in Heaven. There was disobedience in the universe of God.

4. The Creation of the World and of Man. Gen. ii. 1-7; St. John i. 1-5; Rev. iv. 11.

:

ş

HE Almighty, Eternal God was now making His love and power to be known; His love in the Creation of the Angels,

His power also in this, and in the punishment of

those who rebelled. He will not stop here. He will create other beings now, beings of a different nature. The Angels were *spirits*. God will now create creatures of *flesh and blood*.

But first He must create a home for them. In the beginning God created the Heaven, and the earth.

How long ago the beginning was we cannot guess, thousands and millions of years most likely. A long space of time separates the second verse of the Bible from the first. We read of the earth being without form, and empty, as if an enemy had come in and ruined it, as if the mystery of iniquity, 2 Thess. ii. 7, begun in Heaven in the disobedience of the rebellious angels, and cast out from thence, had marred and ruined this other work of God. The loving wisdom of the Most High renews this formless earth, refills its emptiness; and the Spirit of God moved-brooded-upon the face of the waters as upon a Font of Regeneration and Renewal. Then the word went forth. Let there be light. And there was light. Day after day closed and opened, and the earth is clothed with beauty The waters are divided from the and fulness. waters; the dry land appears; the grass, and herb, and tree spring forth; sun, moon, and stars shine in the firmament of heaven; the winged fowl flies through the air; the fish darts through the waters: the cattle and beast are brought forth from the earth. And then the counsel of the Creator, of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, speaks in

Heaven; Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

So God created man in His own image. The Lord God formed Adam out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. He was a little lower than the Angels, indeed; Psalm viii. 5, and yet what a glorious being he was! In his mind and soul able to perceive and know, to worship and erve and love His Maker, able to speak with the Lord God! and to understand something of the mind of God. To him was given dominion over the earth and all its living inhabitants. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.

Let us consider the infinite Wisdom and Power of the Creator in this work. When as yet there was none of them, He saw them all in His foreknowledge. He formed them all out of nothing. And all were perfect, from their very beginning. How far beyond all work of man! The cleverest among us, if he is to make anything, must first have his materials. Then he may arrange, and construct, he can change their appearance and character. But to make out of nothing, to know exactly what will result, to bring it at once to beauty and perfection, is far beyond human power. God alone can do this, for God alone is Almighty. God alone spake the word and they were made, commanded and they were created. Psalm cxlviii. 5.

5. Adam in Paradise. Gen. ii. 1-20.

ND now the earth was the home of happy

living creatures of various kinds. dominion over the rest was given to One. the man made in the Image of God. Let us linger awhile and consider how far above them he was. They were produced from the water or from the earth, directly at the command of God, perfect in their life and beauty. With Adam it was different. The Almighty condescended to be, so to speak, his framer and maker. The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground. There was the beautiful form ready to stand erect, to behold the works of God, to take in knowledge, by the organs of sense, to move in power and grace, to rule in this new home. But as yet the life was wanting. Then the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, bestowing a portion of Himself, a spiritual participation and likeness. Man must have a higher birth than the animals over which he is to rule, a birth from above; he must be born of God, must receive a divine life. Then man became a living soul. made out of the dust, remember, yet made in the image of God, endowed with knowledge, intelligence, reason, faith, religion, holiness, and many other powers of mind and spirit. He, far above all other things of earth, was very good. And the Lord God placed him in a garden-a Paradise-to dress it and to keep it.

We in our fallen, darkened state can hardly understand how perfect this goodness really was. We can at best form but very faint ideas of the blessed condition of Adam in Paradise. His knowledge was plainly far beyond ours. He gave its name to every living thing; names full of meaning according to the nature of each. He possessed the higher knowledge of God, talking with the Lord God face to face; for being pure in heart he could bokupon God. He speaks in prophecy, understandin the Divine purpose with regard to the union of man and woman in holy marriage. He was pure from all sin, purer than the most innocent child. It was not only that he had never sinned. His innocence was brighter, purer than that. There was nothing of a fallen nature in him; no promptings or failings, of fleshly lust and rebellious mind. And great grace was his, a presence within him of God's Good Spirit, calightening, sustaining, defending. It is easier for w. by reason of our sinful nature, to do wrong than to do right. To Adam it was easier to do right than wrong. If he had only kept his innocency, he would never have died. For death is the wages of sin. He would have lived on in this pure and happy life, one in spirit with God, until, his time of trial ended, he would have passed to the perpetual bliss of the very presence of God.

This was a very glorious and a very blessed state, was it not? a very wonderful state for a creature of flesh and blood, formed out of the dust

of the ground! It seems to us quite perfect, or i not as yet quite perfect, at least the beginning o perfection. What could happen to spoil it? Couk Adam ever do anything to offend his loving Father and to forfeit this blessedness?

6. Adam and Eve; Christ and his Church. Gen. ii. 18-25. Ephes v. 23-32.

HERE was this difference between the manner and the other living things of God' creation. God had created them mal

and female. And Adam was alone. The Divin wisdom and power marked his loneliness and pitie it. God will create the woman for the man. Bu how? Not by the mere word of creation. An not by a fresh and separate act, as the man wa created; not by fashioning once more the dust the ground into the beautiful form, and breathin into the nostrils the breath of life, and makin woman to become a living soul. The woman mus be formed out of the man. And the Lord Go caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. An while he slept the Lord God took one of his ribs and thereof made He the woman, and brought he unto the man.

There are many important lessons taught us i this creation of the first woman. She is taken or of man. This marks the union of the two, and a the same time the difference between them. Th man is the head; the woman is from the man, an dependent upon him. He is to rule, but in love; and she, in love, is to obey. Yet not as two separate beings, but as one flesh, both of one heart and of one soul; the wife obedient, the husband ruling, even as our flesh is subject to our mind and spirit.

Here too we have the Divine Law with respect to Holy Marriage. God made them male and female, that in this pure and sanctified union bisband and wife might live together in an honourwhe estate, helps meet the one for the other, in tual society, help, and comfort, and become the ments of a godly seed. Malachi ii. 15. most of all we see here the type of the mystical mion betwixt Christ and His Church. For Christ the Second Adam, the true and perfect man, the beginning of the creation of God. He was alone, intil there fell upon Him the deep sleep of death. The soldier standing beneath the Cross, finding that He is already dead, pierced with his spear that acred side. And thereout came blood and water. L John xix. 34, the life-giving streams of the Roly Sacraments, whereby the Church receives her being and her life, and the children of God are Thew-born to Him by her. The Church is in Christ, as Eve was in Adam; yea, by grace we are The Christ and His Church, as by nature we are in our first parents. God made Eve out of Adam, and His Church He frameth out of the very Flesh, the try wounded and bleeding Side, of the Son of The Lord God brought the woman to Adam, and he welcomed her as his own bone and flesh, and prophesied by the Spirit of God concerning this blessed gift, this sanctified union. The mas shall leave his old relationships, and cleave to his wife. And they twain shall be one flesh. His family shall be as hers, her family shall be to him as his own.

And so the True Man Christ Jesus left His Father and His Heavenly Home to espouse to Himself His Bride the Church. So She is to Him the Mother of all living, the Mother of all the children of God.

7. Man's free Will, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Gen. ii. 15-17.



NE other thing especially marks the difference between the man and the living creatures around him. Man was created

that he might know God and love Him, might worship Him and serve Him. An old belief of the Church has been that, when Satan and his angels rebelled and were cast down from heaven, the Almighty God purposed to raise mankind to the empty seats. But mankind must first be tried and proved.

Now how do we prove those about us? how do we judge whether they love us or not? There is no great difficulty. We watch whether they care to please us, or not; whether they do what we ask, or only think of themselves. Adam's love must be

and tried in the same way. Therefore Adam created free to choose between good and evil. cossessed a freewill. Otherwise his service to would have been forced, and of necessity, like of a machine, or any other thing without life, a must move or stay according to the will of stronger power. Therefore Adam must be free cose. And it was also necessary that he should aimself under obligation to His Creator and r, bound by gratitude and love for mercies red. Then the opportunity was given him of ng whether he preferred God's will to his own, s, whether he preferred good or evil.

this home of our first parents stood one tree. God forbade them to touch. They might eat ery tree except this. For in the day that thou; thereof thou shalt surely die.

was a very simple command, a very small; and yet it was enough to represent, as we a very great principle. It was enough to their obedience and their love in soul and and body. God was supreme, and He red His authority to be acknowledged. As long dam obeyed, so long, in his soul, he acknowledged God's will His first law. To eat of the fruit was to say t, "I will be master, and not God." Again: neld back from Adam knowledge of good and As long as Adam obeyed, so long in his mind nowledged God's right to give and to withhold.

wisdom; that is, he had perfect faith. To eat of the fruit was to say in fact, "I will not trust in God, I must know for myself." And again, God held back from Adam one thing, pleasant to the eye and good for food. As long as Adam obeyed, so long he kept his body in acknowledgment of God's right to give and to withhold pleasant things. To eat of the fruit was to say, in fact, I will not let God make laws for my body. I will please myself in these things." In these three ways the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil appealed to Adam's freewill—to his soul, his mind, and his body. There it stood before him every day; and every day that he turned from it leaving it untouched, he consecrated afresh his whole body. mind, and spirit, to his Maker. He proved his selfdenial, his faith, his obedience, and therefore his love.

And near this forbidden tree, if at any time his thoughts wandered towards it, stood that other tree, the Tree of Life, the Sacrament of Paradise, at hand to renew his sinless life, to sustain him in case the spirit of evil should come and tempt him, with deceitful words.

8. The Temptation and the Fall. Gen. iii.

UT why should these two perfect, happy, sinless creatures wish to touch this forbidden tree? They had everything they

could desire. Do we not envy them as we read of

it? Do we not long for the day when we, the Lord being merciful unto us, may find an entrance into the Paradise of God? We do envy them. And the evil spirits envied them. The devil resolved, if possible, to destroy their happiness. How was this to be done? By making them disobey the wise commands of their loving Father, and obey him instead. He therefore went to them under the form of a serpent, and pretending to be their friend, began by making them doubt God's goodness and love. He spoke first to the woman, telling her that God-what an awful thought!-had spoken untruth to them, that if they ate of it they should not surely die, but, on the contrary, become like gods in their knowledge of good and evil. Eve listened, and doubted God, and believed the evil one. She looked at the forbidden fruit with longing desire; and as she looked, she perceived that it was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make one wise. All this was within her reach. Instead of dying they would receive more knowledge, more power! She atc of it. She gave to her husband, and he did eat. They disobeved God.

Is it not wonderful that they should have yielded so readily to this temptation? They had everything to bind them to their Maker, His loving care, His frequent presence, His mighty power. Yet at the invitation of a strange being they disobey their Father's one command. We are not only amazed.

We are shocked. We think that if God had only created us pure and sinless, with the same helps, we should never have disobeyed as they did. Yet what is the truth? The same trial is repeated in us day after day. God is good to us, giving us all things richly to enjoy, helping us with His grace and presence, only telling us not to yield to sin. We say our morning prayers and go forth from His presence; we are tempted to seek the knowledge of some wicked thing; we fancy something pleasant to the eyes, some fine dress; or we desire something good for food, something that pleases the taste and the lusts of the flesh. We say to ourselves. "God will not surely punish our souls with death for such a little thing!" So we sin. So we rebel against God. So we do in our turn exactly what Adam and Eve did so many thousand years ago.

When they had eaten of this fruit, their newfound knowledge of good and evil shewed them what they had done. Their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They tried to cover their shame. But there was shame within, the miserable shame of sin. Then they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden. And they were afraid. Yes, afraid of Him from whom they had never received anything but kindness, afraid of their Friend, of their Father! And they tried to hide themselves from Him, as if He were not all-seeing, and able to follow them everywhere.

9. The Punishment; Man's Fallen State. Gen. iii. 7-24; Rom. v. 12; I Cor. xv. 21.

HEY found now, to their cost, that God was true. Death! that was the punishment which God had threatened; and

death already had the dominion over them. Not the actual dying, in the immediate separation of the soul from the body. But that miserable, fallen thate of soul and body which is death indeed; the deadness of the soul, the daily waiting for the death of the body. The Lord God called them before Him, and asked them of their fault. The man tried to throw the blame on the woman; the woman to throw it upon the serpent. But in vain. They were verily guilty. The sentence was pronounced. As God had said, so it must be.

First, they were cast out of Paradise, never more to return. The gate of all this happiness was closed against them for ever. The clear waters, the bright flowers, the fair fruit, were no longer theirs. Cursed was the ground for their sake. It would now bring forth thorns and briers, and in the sweat of their brow they must henceforth eat their bread. The whole creation was made subject to bondage. Rom. viii. 20–21.

A great change too had passed over their bodies. They were subject to pain and sickness; any day they might die. They who had just been only a little lower than the Angels, who might have

passed into the Paradise of God, as from one home to another, cannot hope to reach it now except through the grave and gate of Death. And-most terrible of all in their punishment! their inward nature was stained and infected by their sin. They had a tempter to evil within them, an inclination to do wrong, an unwillingness to do right. It was easier for them now to do evil than to do good. And the children which should be born to them would inherit this fallen and corrupt nature, both in body and soul. We see every day how children take after their parents in feature, and character. and constitution. So it is with their souls. They are born in a state of wrath, lying under God's judgment, with no power of themselves to choose and do the good, with sinful inclinations ready to break out into all forms of evil. This is what we call original guilt, or original sin-the stain of guilt upon our soul, the inclination to sin within us as running on through countless generations.

What a change in God's world in one day, that world which He had made so good! It was a ruin now, the home of sin, cursed of God, dark with sorrow, through that one act of disobedience. How God must hate sin to punish it so severely! How ought we to hate it, and to flee from it, lest by wilful sin we again forfeit God's love and mercy in Christ, and cast ourselves down into those depths from which by His mercy He saved us!

PART II.

THE PREPARATION.

10. The Promise of a Redcemer in the Seed of the Woman. Gen. iii. 15.

UT God in wrath remembers mercy. He had created all things for His glory, and He would not lightly cast away those whom He had created with so much wisdom. whom He loved with an everlasting love, for whom He had prepared such blessing and glory. The Gospel Story, begun in God's eternal foreknowledge, is not to be thus abruptly ended. If so, it were no Gospel Story, no good tidings of great joy. The promise of a Deliverer, darkly uttered and dimly understood, is given in mercy and hope to these rebellious and fallen creatures, together with their sentence of condemnation. The serpent had been successful in his temptation. But his victory shall not endure for ever. The Seed of the Woman shall appear, to fight with him and overcome him. Not without suffering, however. But the end shall be that this Seed of the Woman. hurt indeed, yet victorious, shall bruise the serpent's head, Rom xvi. 20.

Wonderful and mysterious words! Enmity between the serpent and the Seed of the Woman. The serpent is the devil. The Seed of the Woman—who is He? One born not after the common order of mankind, one knowing no earthly father after the flesh, and therefore truly the Seed of the *Woman*, the Son of Mary, the blessed among women, the Virgin Mother of the Son of God. And why the seed of the woman, again? Because, as the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression, I Tim. ii. 14, and became the instrument of the world's destruction, so God would make the woman, through her faith, this instrument of the world's salvation.

The Serpent bruised His heel, as it was written. The Seed of the Woman came a Man of Sorrows, suffering bitter pains of body and of spirit, dying, dead, and buried. But by death He destroyed Death. He bruised the serpent's head. He turned the curse into a blessing. He made Death, by which the devil had held so many generations in fear and bondage, Heb. ii. 14, to be the gate of Life, a glad entrance into immortality.

They had then in their misery something to look for. Though our first parents could not understand the promise, as we by the light of Christ's teaching, and by its fulfilment, now understand it, they knew thus much at least, that their misery and loss was not to be for ever; that the Lord God had begun a work of restoration; and that, though

were through much tribulation, the children of en should rise, through the Seed of the Woman, to the full enjoyment and glory of all that they d sinned away; that they should have God, the more and perfectly, for their Friend and their ther; that, in the end, there should be no more use; and that in the new and sinless heaven and th, God Himself should once more dwell with speople, and be their God. Rev. xxi. 1-4.

11. Sacrifice. Gen. iii. 21; iv. 3-4.

HE darkness of their fallen state was lightened by the promise of a Redeemer. But meanwhile, until the Redeemer and Rerer should come, how should the fallen creature e to approach his Creator? How should his ble memory be quickened, his fainting hopes be tained, through those long weary years of wait-? The Lord gives him a means of approach, a petual memorial and pleading of the promise, the Altar and the Sacrifice. And the Sacrifice upplied by death. Worship had been offered in adise, but no such worship as this; for there 1 and death were unknown. But now the living nal, the gentlest of its kind, must be taken and to a violent death, by the shedding of its blood, man may pay to God the required service. eover it was not the mere slaying of the lamb, the offering it by fire upon the Altar, which d favour with the Lord. All depended upon

the heart of the offerer. It was Abel's faith which made his sacrifice more acceptable than Cain's Hebrews xi. 4. Faith in what? In the promise Seed of the Woman, of course, and in the forgiveness of sins by the Blood of the better Sacrifice which was to come, the one perfect satisfaction and at onement for the sins of the whole world. This was the position of Adam and his children, therefore They were weighed down by the consciousness of sin; they could not themselves make atonement they could not undo the past; they could not give perfect obedience for the future. Merit they none to bring. They could only plead for mercia Yet on what grounds and conditions? It was for God to lay down His own conditions; and He required sacrifices. Without shedding of blood was no remission of sins. Lev. xvii. 11. Then the thought would rise, "What connection is there between the death of the lamb or the bull and my sinful soul? I see none." No. It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Heb. x. 4. There must be a better sacrifice, a more worthy, more meritorious death. And faith took the promise, and interpreting it by the needs and cravings of the sin-diseased, deathstricken soul, saw in the ages to come, the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without spot. provided by the Father's love, the Fountain opened for sin and for all uncleanness. Zech, xiii, t.

So it was. However dim their faith, the chil-

en of God looked onwards, nevertheless, to the amb slain from the foundation of the world. ev. xiii. 8. And this same faith, though obscured id fading out, still taught the heathen world that was fallen from its original happiness and beauty, at not by man's merit, but by death alone could be restored; and that God by death would take ray Death, and restore to us everlasting Life.

. The World before the Flood. Gen. iv. 8.; vi. 1-18.

HE effects of disobedience soon shewed themselves, first in direct acts of bloodshed, then in the gradual decay of the nowledge and fear of the Lord. The first death as a murder; Cain rose up against Abel his rother, and slew him. Lamech followed in the ame path of violence. Gen. iv. 23. The world rent on much as it does in our own day, inreasing in civilization, refinement, and comfort. lities are built; wealth is amassed; mankind are ssociated for mutual service, friendship, and de-With the sense of their own power, with he indulgence of worldly and fleshly lusts, they earn to defy God, or to forget Him. Time rolls on, and after seventeen hundred years this was the rerult: God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth; the earth was filled with violence, and every magination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually.

This it is for man to go his own way, to trust in himself, to forsake God.

But the merciful Creator did not suffer men that to fall from Him without rebuke, and warning.

For nine hundred years Adam lived on, to be the witness of God's truth, the priest and the preache to his children. Was not this a part of his punish ment, and a very bitter one, to be the parent of: sinful ungodly race, and to see the ruin which hi own disobedience had wrought for them and i No repentance of his could undo the evi Oh, what misery, to think of the Paradise he ha lost, and to face this awful crowd of sinful thought and words, and deeds! As a preacher he migh reprove, rebuke, exhort, with the remnants of the original light and wisdom which his sin had not we blotted out from his memory. As a priest he migh offer the sin-offering for the disobedient, and gathe some around him to call upon, and to call then selves by, the Name of the Lord. As an example he might go softly all his days in the bitterness of his soul, in a life-long repentance. But the curhad fallen.

After him came others, children of God, a hol seed, preachers of righteousness, from Seth to Noa And God, in His pity, worked with them. The same Spirit, which had brooded over the empty are formless earth, strove with the rebellious, but strow in vain. The sentence was pronounced, but me cared not: their ears were deaf, their hearts has

d. They went their ways, eating and drinking, nying and giving in marriage, until the day that ah entered into the Ark, and the flood came, I destroyed them all. St. Luke xvii. 27.

The history of the past is the type and pledge of future. The world goes its own way, enlighted, civilized, strong, and self-indulgent. The sister of Christ speaks the warning of the judgent. The Spirit of God strives with the disobent, rebellious heart. Too often in vain. As it s then, so shall the coming of the Son of Man! Are we ready?

. The Flood; the Ark; the Covenant with Noah. Gen. vi. 13-22; vii., viii.

HE Flood came and destroyed them all. Yet not all, for eight persons, Noah and his family, were saved in the Ark, which desafely over the waves until the work of God is accomplished. An awful token of God's revengeance upon them that despise Him! And tless a sure token that the Lord knoweth how deliver the godly. St. Jude 9. This was the st great visitation in wrath which Scripture ords for us. Nearly eighteen hundred years the rid's patience had been tried; He had sent mings, but all in vain. Yet this forbearance I love are not even now utterly exhausted. will save some, to be the parents of a new veration; that they, warned by the greatness of

the punishment, won by the greatness of the mercy, may tell the story to their children and their children's children, and that this cleansed and baptized earth may be renewed as a dwelling place of righteousness.

But this Flood is more than an event in the past history of the world, more than a warning; it is a Type, part of the Divine teaching and preparation for the new and better Covenant. The Ark is a type of the Church. Its builder, Noah, was a type. of Christ. His name, signifying "comfort" or "rest," speaks beforehand of the true Comforter; St. John. xiv. 16-18, the only giver of refreshment and rest. As the Ark was built by Noah, so is the Church built by Christ. Noah, like Christ, came a preacher of righteousness. Salvation from the flood of God's wrath is to be found within the Ark with Noah, within the Church with Christ. The waters that drowned the disobedient, bare up the Ark, and saved those who had sought refuge therein. like figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth also now save us, through the resurrection of Christ: not the mere bodily washing, but the confession of the true faith, in the answer of a good conscience. Peter iii. 21. For it is by Baptism that we are admitted into union with Christ our Saviour: and in-His Body, the Church, of which the Ark is the type, we are carried safely over the waves of this troublesome world to the land of everlasting life.

The flood subsides; Noah and his family come

forth upon the dry land. The Altar is built, the sacrifice is offered; a new and better covenant is made with Noah, and the Bow in the Cloud is given as the pledge of eternal Mercy and Love. Even so the true Noah offered the offering and sweet smelling sacrifice of Himself, Ephes. v. 2, and he wins for us the blessing of an Everlasting Covenant. We see the Lord God Almighty sitting upon His throne; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. Rev. iv. 3. This is the faithful witness in heaven that He will wer be mindful of His covenant and promise. This is His assurance of mercy after punishment.

But one of these eight, saved in the Ark, was a profane mocker, and a curse fell upon him. Saved, and yet lost—how often do we see this! Ham saved, yet lost! Judas chosen, yet a devil! Oh, may He grant to us, saved in the Ark of His Church, not to fall away into destruction, but by faith and patience to endure unto the end, and to be saved when the heaven and the earth, which now s, shall be consumed in the flood of fire!

4. Abraham, and the Promisc. Gen. xii. 1-3; Acts vii. 1-8. Gal. iii.

ITH Abraham begins a new chapter in the sacred history. Again the world had fallen away from God, and again He chose

it for Himself one who should be the father of a wand better generation. This man, Abraham,

in all his history, is, like Noah, not merely a great example, but also a remarkable type. Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will shew thee. He is a figure of the Church, called to come forth out of the world, from its darkness and false worship, to be the household and family of God.

The rite of circumcision, the mark in the flesh, is given to Abraham, a seal of his faith, a sign of his acceptance with God. Even so there is given to us the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, whereby we are grafted into His Church, made His children, and members of His dear Son.

Again, to Abraham, when as yet he had no son, the promise is given that his children shall be as the stars of heaven, and that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. Gen. xv. 5; xviii. 18. This too Abraham believes. The child of promise is born to him.

Then comes an even greater trial. Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering. Gen. xxii. 2. His faith endured even this. He would not withhold his best and dearest. He would not even then doubt God's power to fulfil the promise that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. He accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead. Heb. xi. 19.

God accepted the sacrifice before it was actually completed. Abraham had proved his faith by his works. The promise is repeated, even more dis-

tinctly: In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Gen. xxii. 15-18.

Here again, all is figure, type, and prophecy; all is teaching and preparation.

Isaac lying bound to the Altar, offered in will as a sacrifice, received again, in a figure, from the dead-does He not shew to us the world's Redeemer, Jesus the beloved Son of God, offering Himself an acceptable sacrifice upon the Cross, risen again, the Father of the everlasting age, of the saints and children of God, that great multitude which no man can number? And Abraham, looking upon Isaac, and then forward into the distant ages, by faith in the promises, saw the day of Christ, and was glad. St. John viii. 56. In His seed, the Seed of the Woman, all nations of the earth were to be blessed, yea, and they are blessed. In Isaac all the Jewish nation was offered to God, and God received them to be His own elect and peculiar people. type of the Holy Catholic Church, which being in Christ, shares in His Sacrifice, and is likewise declared to be the family and household of God.

They who are Abraham's seed according to the flesh have now lost their blessing. The Christian Church is the true seed of Abraham. Gal. iii. 26–29. What then? Is our eternal salvation therefore assured? Nay. We too may fall away. Because of unbelief they were broken off, but thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. Rom. xi. 20.

Israel in Egypt; The Passover. Gen. xlvi. Exod. xii.

T is the same story, again and again repeated, God shewing mercy to fallen man; man, restored, falling away again from

God; and God once more extending mercy to him, raising him from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. Abraham is the father of the faithful and the friend of God. Isaac follows in Abraham's steps. Jacob again, though often faulty, never loses faith. He dies in Egypt, leaving his children there in wealth, honour, and knowledge of the truth. They grow and multiply exceedingly, but in less: than two hundred years they have almost forgotten God; they have become an enslaved, ignorant, debased nation. The Divine power raises up Moses to be their deliverer and their teacher. By ten grievous plagues the Lord subdues the hard heart of Pharaoh. In the tenth and last plague the destroying Angel sweeps through the land of Egypt, slaving the first-born son in every household.

How then did the children of Israel escape this visitation?

Through the blood of the lamb sprinkled upon their doors.

They were commanded to kill a lamb in every household, and to sprinkle its blood upon the lintel and two sideposts, that the destroying Angel, seeing the blood, might pass over that house. All

that God promised was exactly fulfilled. There was not an house of the Egyptians in which there vas not one dead, while of the children of Israel ied not one. The Egyptians thrust them forth hat very night. Israel, so long a slave, was free. Is not this again a type and figure of a world sold ider sin, kept in the cruel bondage of Satan, lable to free itself, crying unto God in its agony? od smites the oppressor of our souls, and gives and freedom to His people. But how do they ape? For they too have sinned grievously against m, and deserve to die. It is by the shedding of od that they are saved, the Blood of the Lamb God without spot, sprinkled upon their hearts. Moreover, that the Israelites may the better derstand their redemption from death by the od of this lamb, that they may have their part in death, they are bidden to eat its flesh in a solemn al. And not on that night only. It is to be an linance for ever, a yearly sacrifice and a yearly st, in remembrance of their deliverance; it is the RD'S PASSOVER.

Does not this point to the better Sacrifice, to the ath of the Lamb of God, by whose most precious pod we are delivered from the power of the devil? ses it not point to One who should give Himself bacrifice for ever, who should give His Flesh to be food of our souls, a perpetual Feast, even Christ Passover? The Christian rejoices as he makes morial of his Lord's Death, not on Easter

Day only, but on the "Easter Day in every week" at least; and thus being partaker of the Death of the Lamb of God, he lifts up his heart in thanksgiving for that spiritual deliverance which the Israel of the old Covenant saw darkly under these types and shadows.

Moscs, and the going forth out of Eygpt. Exod. xiv. Heb. xi. 23-29.

HE leader in this great deliverance was Moses. Preserved in infancy almost by a miracle, he was bred up as the son of

Pharaoh's daughter. But, by faith in the promises made to Abraham and his seed, Moses preferred the reproach of Christ, and cast in his lot with his oppressed and enslaved brethren. God sent him to intercede for his brethren with Pharaoh, to bring the ten plagues upon the land, to give command concerning the Passover, and to lead the people forth as their Deliverer, their Shepherd, and their Prince.

On that very night that the first-born in Egypt were slain, the Israelites go forth, and advance as far as the Red Sea. Pharaoh's heart has by this time recovered from the stroke which had fallen on his land. He repents that he has let Israel go. He pursued them, and overtook them at the Red Sea. And Israel cried out unto the Lord.

But the Lord does not shew mercy grudgingly. At His command Moses stretched forth His rod.

ne Lord made the waters to stand as a wall ir right hand and on their left, and by faith ssed through the Red Sea, which the Egypssaying to do were drowned. Then sang heir song of triumph.

e things, again, are written not for them only story, but for us also, written as ensamples irnings. I Cor. x. I-II. The people were tized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. is a clear and perfect type of the beginnings stian life. Pharaoh represents the hard task-the devil. Moses is the Saviour, first reby his brethren, then acknowledged and. By many miracles, by death in sacrifice, iverance is effected, even as Christ, by miraby death, hath saved us. The Lord's people ed. Now there must be a division between life and the new; even the Red Sea, type waters of Baptism.

not the water that saves them, of course; is only the means. While the Israelites through the water, the power of God, in the of cloud, overshadowed them, leading them but blinding and confusing their enemies. Holy Spirit of God overshadows the rece Christian in His Baptism, henceforth his and Protector if he will only follow to his id.

r are saved. Are they then already in posof the promised land? No. There is the

journey of life before them; they murmur against Moses and against God. Very few will endure unto the end. So we see that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterwards destroyed them that believed not. St. Jude 5.

Mercy and warning from first to last! So it will be to the end of the world. So Christian people, baptized, regenerate, brought into a state of salvation, fall from grace, may forsake their own mercy, and fail at last.

17. The Tabernacle, and the Sacrifices. Exod. XXXI. 7-11; Levit. X. 1-4; Heb. ix; X. 1-12.

HE Lord God, having now taken to Himself a chosen generation, a royal priest-hood, a peculiar people, Exod. ix. 6;

I St. Peter ii. 5–9, teaches them by his servant Moses how he will be served and worshipped Moses is called up into the mount, to speak with God face to face, to receive the ten commandments of the law written by the very finger of God, and to see in the things in the Heavens patterns and examples for the earthly sanctuary and worship Exod. xxv. 40. He is commanded to make a Tabernacle, or tent, for the service of God, to se apart the sons of Levi to be priests, and to provide the Altar, the Laver, the Candlestick, and the Arl of the Covenant, overlaid with gold, upon which God might manifest the glory of His Presence.

. The service of the Tabernacle was to be, in the

main, the same as had been paid by their fathers before them, that is, the living creature must be irst slain, by the shedding of its blood, and then ffered in sacrifice by fire on the Altar. But now ew statutes and ordinances are given; distinctions re made in the sacrifices. Thus the Lord teaches lis people. In the ceremonies of the Old Coveant we see what we may call a creed in types. hey taught that mankind are born in sin; that is ease was uncleanness; that the touch of the dead as defilement. What a picture of man's condion, unclean in his birth, in life, in death!

There were other causes of uncleanness besides lese, separating a man from the company of his flows, and forbidding his presence in the House of od. All these had to be purged away by some atward act, or sacrifice. Much more was cleansing a datonement necessary after actual sin. Not even the sins committed through infirmity and ignorance ere allowed to pass unmarked. The atonement ust be offered for all these. Mankind was made feel that they were very far gone from original pheousness, that there was no health in them.

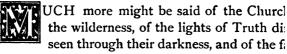
For these defilements, these sins, there were my kinds of sacrifice. No one single kind could resent the Sacrifice of the Cross in its fulness. e Sin-offering, Levit. iv. 5-6, represents the -ONE-MENT, or Satisfaction, there made for our s. The Burnt-offering, Levit. i., represents the ire self-devotion of Jesus, and the Father's accep-

tance of Him. The *Meat-offering* of fine fl Levit. ii. 2, foreshadows the Church's perper memorial of the Sacrifice for ever in the F Eucharist under the form of bread and wine. *Peace-offering*, Levit. iii., of which the Priest and offerer partook, declares the grace extended to who was thus permitted to feast upon gifts will God had accepted to Himself. I Cor. x. 16-21

Most of all, the Sacrifice of the Great Day Atonement, and the blood carried by the H Priest, once a year and once only, into the Hol place of all, and sprinkled by him upon the Meseat, the very throne of God's Presence and Glmost distinctly points us to the work of our Giller High Priest. For so it was that Christ, after had offered Himself upon the Cross, rose, and His own Blood entered in, once, into Heaven it and the very Presence of God, having obtaineternal redemption for us. Heb. ix. 7–12.

Thus God prepared His people for the coming their Redeemer; thus He shewed them, in type the power of the Priesthood of Christ.

18. The Church in the Wilderness. Acts vii. 37-1 Cor. x. 1-10.



notes of the Gospel Story which broke the sile of that earlier day. The whole history is full

id figures. We read in those first five books. e Lord has done for us; we may see in the s the picture of ourselves. For what did or them, and purpose for them? There is verance from Egypt; that represents our nce from the power of the devil. A pillar and of fire followed them, the visible the Divine presence, guiding them by day right; type of the Holy Spirit, our Comd Guide in danger and in darkness. They baptized unto Moses in the Cloud and in even so we have been baptized and born water and the Spirit, and made disciples of of God. They hungered and thirsted, and is given to them bread from Heaven, and it of the Stony Rock. No Christian can hat these things mean. I am the living nich came down from Heaven, and the Bread ill give is my Flesh, which I will give for of the world. St. John vi. 51. They did ie same spiritual meat, and did all drink the ritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual at followed them, and that Rock was Christ. Rock to be smitten once only, even as ed once, and dieth no more; a Rock to be o, Numb. xx. 8, that it should give forth its g waters always. Even so Christ giveth us His Flesh, and to drink the Blood flowing s pierced Side, not in the repetition of His. it at the word of His minister. Under this.

guidance, in the power of this meat and drink, the Israelites, if they had only believed God, and obeyed His servant Moses, would have marched, conquering and to conquer, into the immediate enjoyment of the promised land. But the evil nature remained unsubdued. Unbelief, murmurings, disobedience, rebellions, and the lusts of the flesh, provoked the Lord to wrath. They forfeit their inheritance. Yet His pity and love are ever towards them. they are bitten by the fiery flying serpents and cry for mercy, the Serpent of Brass is hung up before their eyes that they may look and live, Numb. xxi. 4-9; type of Him who was lifted up on the Cross, that all the ends of the world might look unto Him and be saved. Isa. xlv. 22. In spite of their sin their raiment waxed not old, and the heavenly food failed not till they had passed the river of Jordan, and entered into that good land. So will He forgive us on our repentance; so will He preserve us, and give us to eat of the Bread from Heaven, until having passed the Jordan of death, we may enter in, and may no more need the Sacramental Food; for the Lamb Himself shall feed us, and make us to sit down to meat at His Heavenly Table. Rev. vii. 17.

19. The Prophets. 1 St. Peter i. 10-12; 2 St. Peter i. 19-21.



NE great promise was now fulfilled; the children of Abraham were in possession of the land of Canaan. But the greater pro-

mise that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xxii. 18, was not yet fulfilled, nor that earlier promise made to Eve that her Seed should bruise the head of the Serpent. Gen. iii. 15. The fulness of time was not yet come. Meanwhile God will keep these promises before His people; He will, by degrees, throw fuller light upon them; He will add to them, and will give pledges and proofs of His truth by foretelling, through His prophets, the things which shall be hereafter.

The knowledge of the future is hid in God. That much we all confess. For ourselves, the very wisest of us can only guess at what will happen. We say of the future, "God alone knows." From time to time, therefore, the Holy Ghost spake by the prophets, sending them to reprove or to comfort, and instructing them to appeal to the unseen future, in proof of their authority from God. Some of their prophecies were soon fulfilled, and this of course would confirm the faith of the people in those which spoke more and more clearly of the coming Christ. In this way the chosen people were strengthed in their faith, and encouraged in patient expectation of their Redeemer. Acts iii. 24.

These prophets filled a double office. They were preachers for their own day as well as foretellers of the future, preachers sent directly from God. They often had to rebuke, and these rebukes were not always welcome. Ezek. ii. 3-7. Many suffered sievous persecutions. Nevertheless prophet after

prophet came, adding to the warnings and predictions already given. Their words were written down, treasured, and studied; until the devout and the learned among the Jews looked for the Christ, almost as knowing how and when He should appear.

The Church of Christ appeals to prophecy as a proof of the truth of Christianity. No religion which the world has ever known can do what we can do—take up the word of prophecy written so many hundred years before its fulfilment, and say, "Here is the prophecy; there is the fulfilment!" Only the All-seeing All-mighty God could stake His truth upon words spoken so long before and bring them to pass after so many years. As the prophet spoke beforehand, giving his words as a sign, so we look back, and appeal to those words. in proof that the Scriptures are the oracles of God. It was as the oracles of God that the devout Jews received them, and believing the prophecies which spoke of Christ, His lowliness and His glory, His weakness and His might, His death and His resurrection, looked forward in all the afflictions which befel themselves and their nation, to the day of Christ; and by faith they saw it, and were glad. In his deepest misery the Jew remembered that he was of God's chosen nation, and rejoiced that a day would come when a king of the house of David should reign, when the promised Seed of Abraham should appear, and all the nations of the world should be blessed in Him.

20. The Chosen Nation, the Peculiar People. Levit. xx. 22-26; 1 St. Peter ii. 5-9.

E might speak much more of the Old Covenant, in token that the Almighty's purpose was steadily kept in view from the first.

Man had fallen so deeply into darkness and corruption that there was danger lest the whole world should lose all remembrance of God in its uncleanness, idolatry, and ignorance; danger lest, when the Redeemer came, none should receive Him or desire Him. Hence the need of a chosen nation to be a witness and a keeper of the revealed will. Therefore God's call of Abraham, and His deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Therefore these sacrifices and types, these warnings and prophecies. Therefore these burdensome outward ceremonies, these punishments and restorations, these special laws separating lew from Gentile. Therefore especially this Gospel in the prophets, the promise that the world's Redeemer and King would be born of a Jewish mother. The Jewish Church and nation were kept separate in order to maintain the true faith, the .hopeful expectation; in order that, when the Son of God should be manifested, He might come unto His own, a people prepared for the Lord, eager to receive Him and to carry on to others the good tidings of great joy.

He came, and though many of His own received Him not, there were faithful and expectant hearts waiting for redemption in Jerusalem. That separation of the Jew from the heathen, which at first seems strange to us, has served for the furtherance of the Gospel. Many who rejected afterward believed. From them went forth the heralds a Salvation bearing into all the world the message of the crucified and risen Jesus.

The middle wall of partition is broken down now. Eph. ii. 14. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile; we are all one in Christ Jesus, in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the Body of Christ. Gal. iii. 28. Nevertheless this law vet remains unaltered, that His Church should keep herself unspotted from the world; that all we who name the Name of Christ should depart from iniquity; that we esteem ourselves in Christ-what the children of Israel were under Moses—a royal priesthood and an holy nation. May He grant it so to be! May we be found worthy of Him who hath called us into His kingdom and glory, when He shall come with His holy Angels to separate the wicked from among the just! May He then find us waiting for His coming, and acknowledge us as His own; may He grant us a place in the great multitude of His Saints of all nations, and people, and kindred, and tongues, when He shall come to fulfil His promises, to manifest the victory of the Seed of the Woman, and to show the spiritual seed of Abraham in number above the stars of Heaven!

The Gospel in the Old Testament. Gal. iii. 8. St. Luke x. 23-24. Rom. ix. 4-5.

HE Jewish nation was separate, by the Divine purpose and teaching, from the rest of the world. Stern and distinct laws forbade m to marry with the heathen, or to join in emes of worldly wealth and conquest. They had eligion of their own, with rites and ceremonies, ich, more than any other religion of the ancient rld, kept continually before the mind man's true sition towards God. But it was not only by these at God kept His people separate. He had from e first preached a Gospel to them, Gal. iii. 8, in hich they had a special part, that Everlasting ospel, which is written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning hrist. It was by faith in this Gospel that the aints of the Old Testament pleased God. The xoks of Moses begin with the promise, and shew w the Patriarchs looked forward to the Seed of the loman, and the Seed of Abraham. The dving cob prophesies of Shiloh, who shall gather the tions as their King and Shepherd. Gen. xlix. 10. laam sings of the Star that shall come out of cob, and the Sceptre that shall rise out of Israel. imb. xxiv. 17. Moses foretells of the mighty proet like unto himself. Deut. xviii. 15.

In the Psalms the faint rays of the rising Sun of ghteousness shine more clearly. David foresees

his Son and his Lord, a King, the Christ of Ps. ii. 1. All who trust in Him are blessed; al resist Him shall perish. Messiah is as a I King reigning among men from the flood un world's end. His form is of more than h beauty, His lips overflow with grace. God blessed Him for ever, and His Name shall e for ever. Ps. lxxii. Nay, He is more than mar Him David makes his song of praise. Thy Tl O God, is for ever and ever. Ps. xlv. 6-7. to sit as Lord on God's right Hand until His mies are made His footstool. Ps. cx. I. An is Priest as well as King, of that order, older Levi, to which Abraham, Levi's father, had pa gifts, from which Abraham had received bless

With the later ages the dawn breaks almos day. Isaiah, as the great Gospel prophet, tel people of the Rod out of the Stem of Jess whom God has put His Spirit, to preach and to deliverance to every sufferer. He is to be the to lighten the Gentiles; the Salvation of God end of the earth. Isa. xlix. 6. He will write th of the Lord upon the heart and conscience of true Israel. Jer. xxxi. 33. He shall sit as a upon His throne. Zech. vi. 13.

Yet with all this glory is mingled suffering. Crown is hung upon a Cross. The Psalms sether note of mourning; the prophets re-ec. Messiah must be a man of sorrows and acquare with grief, bruised and wounded, scourged

pierced, until His soul is poured out unto death. But His soul shall not be left in hell; after three days shall He revive. Then He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. He shall be Counsellor, Deliverer, Redeemer. His titles are not fully written till He is described, the Mighty od, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. This was the faith and the hope of Abraham's aldren. Messiah was to be theirs. And though ey saw but dimly, they looked for Him, and ade their boast in His Name.

God the Son, the Saviour from the beginning. St. John v. 17, 19-23. Prov. viii. 22-31.

UT was the Hope of Israel, the Saviour of the world, only as One that should come? While the Almighty Father was ruling over

while the Blessed Spirit was teaching the orant and striving with the rebellious, was the ernal Son standing afar off, a Guest to be pected indeed, but as yet a stranger to His peo? Far be it from us to imagine this. Hear the sdom of God, speaking in the Book of Proverbs; 30-31: I was daily His delight, rejoicing ays before Him; rejoicing in the habitable parts His earth, and my delights were with the sons men. Hear His own words: My Father workhitherto, and I work. He who was from the inning, by whom all things were created, was upholding all things by the word of His power,

and by Him all things consist. Col. i. 17. He is known to us as the great I AM who spake to Moses, saving the people out of the land of Egypt, feeding them and giving them water, tempted and provoked by them. Deut. xxxiii. 8; I Cor. x. 9, until He destroyed them that believed not. He was their Saviour. In His love and pity He redeemed them, and He bare them and carried them all the days of old. Isa, lxiii, 8-9. He it was, as ancient writers explain it, who shone forth, in the brightness of the Father's glory, upon the elders of Israel on Sinai. Exod. xxiv. 9-11. He it was, most certainly, who was seen by Isaiah, the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple, while the Seraphim, veiling their faces in awe, cried one to another, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. Isa. vi. 1-6. These words our Lord takes to Himself. These things said Esaias-of the coming Christ—when He saw His glory, and spake of Him. St. John xii. 41. By His infinite merits He was the Saviour of all that believe in His Name, Acts x. 43, from the foundation of the world, though they saw Him not as we see Him.

By virtue of His eternal *Priesthood*, and His all-prevailing Sacrifice, offered in will from all Eternity, He won forgiveness of sins for all sinners from the first to the latest. By virtue of His eternal *Kingship* He delivered those who sought to Him, whosoever they were. By His Holy Spirit He

ood pleasure of the Father and for the fulness ne, that the world might be ripe for His prethis mind was in Him, as He beheld the helpless world; Though He was in the form d, equal with God, Himself God, He would not by that glory when our Salvation might be by His laying it aside. He waited, looking rd to the day when He should empty Himself's glory, and be made in the likeness of menthe Angels waited also, wondering, that they a fulness of time, might know the mystery had been hid from ages and from generations.

The fulness of time. Gal. iv. 1-4; Ephes. 1.9-10.

OUR thousand years passed and the promises yet remained unfulfilled. Had then God forgotten to be gracious? No. Man be impatient, lest his opportunity be lost. But in His mighty strength, waits for the fulness he before He executes His eternal purposes, hese years He was preparing the world for the lig of His Son. The devout souls among the had fed upon the prophecies and looked for Redemption. The wise men of Arabia were to follow the Star of the Epiphany. Throughne whole East a wide expectation now prevailed. Jewish child should become the ruler of the

world. And this period is called in Scripture, the FULNESS OF TIME.

Why so? Why was this time more fitted for the Incarnation of the Word, the manifestation of the Son of God, than any other time before or since?

If God had sent His Son into the world earlier, mankind would not have understood the mischief which sin works, nor God's hatred of it, nor their need of One greater than themselves to deliver them. If God had waited longer they might, in despair, have forgotten or despised the promise.

Again, if God had sent His Son into the world earlier we should have lost the great proof given us in the prophecies which speak so plainly of Him through all those years. If we had not that long history of God's dealings with His chosen people, we should hardly have understood the greatness and goodness of Christ, and the awful importance of His work. If He had come in the world's infancy, before civilization had made any progress, the spirit of infidelity would have made objection that no reliance could be placed in so ancient and dim a tale; that we could not trust a story so contrary to all present experience, grounded only upon the distant traditions of an ignorant and unlettered past.

Look now at the condition of the world at that time. All civilized nations were then united under one empire; a universal peace prevailed; and one language—Greek—was spoken by educated persons everywhere, by Jews, and Romans, as well as by the

Greeks. The heathen were sick of their old fables and superstitions. The desire of all nations was for Light and Help; for some one to come who should explain the mystery of their being, who should tell them of a cure for sin, of peace for the troubled conscience, of that better time when "the golden age," as they called it, would return, Isa. xi. 6-9; lxv. 17-25, and fear, and pain, and sorrow, be put away for ever. The law, the sacrifices, and the prophets of the Jew, the helplessness and darkness of the heathen, alike bade the world lift up its head, for its Redemption must be drawing nigh.

That was the fulness of time. And then God sent forth His Son.

A few years later, and the chosen nation, miraculously preserved until His coming, was scattered and destroyed. The Holy City was trodden under foot, the Temple cast down to the ground. The Jewish people, and the Jewish Religion, had fulfilled their part. A new Dispensation had begun. The Church and the Religion of Jesus had brought light and life to the world.

PART III.

THE INCARNATION OF GOD THE SON.

24. The Angel appears to Zacharius. St. Luke i. 5-25,



HE fulness of time was come; the time was at hand for the fulfilment of the prophecies. The sceptre had departed from

Judah. Gen. xlix. 10. Herod, an Edomite, was king of Judæa, under Augustus, Emperor of Rome. And now the forerunner of the Lord is to be born, of whom Isaiah and Malachi wrote.

There were living at Jerusalem two aged persons, Zacharias the priest and his wife Elizabeth, both-blameless before God. And the great wish of their hearts had never been granted. They were childless. In the order of his course Zacharias went to the Temple to execute the Priest's office, and while he was burning incense at the Golden Altar before the Holy Place, the congregation meanwhile praying without in the court of the people, an Angel of the Lord appears to him, with the assurance that his prayers are heard, and that his wife Elizabeth, shall bear a son. Zacharias is troubled at the sight

of the Angel. He is still more troubled at the divine message. For the Angel goes on to say that this son shall be a cause of infinite joy to many; his life is to be strange and separate; he shall be a Nazarite, drinking neither wine nor strong drink; he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; and he shall go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah—that greatest of prophets, austere and lonely in his life, the stern rebuker of sin, the restorer of the true worhip—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. It is a sore trial of the old man's faith, toosore. Whereby shall I know this? Is it that he distrusts the power of God? or is the news toogood, too wonderful for him? The Angel continues, telling his name. He is Gabri-el, the strength of God, who stands in the presence of God, sent five hundred years before as the messenger to-Daniel, ix. 20-27, of the birth and death of Messiah, soon to be sent to speak greater things than And this shall be the sign of his truth: Zacharias shall be dumb until these things be fulfilled

The Angel leaves him, and the priest goes forth to the people, speechless. He is unable to bless them in the appointed threefold blessing, Numb. vi. 23-26, and they understand by his gestures that his dumbness is miraculous, that he has seen a vision.

We can fancy that this strange occurrence would be talked about with wondering, and no doubt pious, interest. And the wonder would be increased; when, in addition to Zacharias' continued silence, it was known that the aged Elizabeth was about to become a mother. Men's thoughts would go back to the children miraculously born in the old times to Isaac, and Samson, and Samuel: and already they would be musing in their hearts what manner of child this should be. St. Luke i. 66.

25. The Angelical Salutation. St. Luke i. 26-29.

HE Divine preparation for the birth of the Forerunner of Messiah has been made. His parents are chosen; the father, Zacha-

rias, a priest, holy in his office; both blameless in their life. Next, the Great Mystery of Godliness, is to be revealed. The Word, which was with God from the beginning, which was God, is to be made Flesh, and to dwell among us. The Uncreated God shall be born of a woman, He whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain. What shall be the place of His rest? I Kings viii. 27; Acts vii. 49.

Let us look once more to the promise, and to ; the prophecy.

The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the serpent's head. A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son. Through a woman's faith and obedience a remedy shall be found for the ruin that was wrought by a woman's unbelief and pride. Not by way of natural generation, but by the power of the Holy

Spirit overshadowing a pure virgin, must God the Son take upon Him our nature, so wholly escaping its taint and corruption. Where then shall be found a maiden worthy of this high honour, that of her substance the Lord of Life shall take unto Himself the Body prepared for Him? She must be sought, in order that the Scripture may be fulfilled, in the tribe of Judah, in the house and lineage of David.

Such an one there was, foreseen and elect of God, Mary, the maiden of Nazareth, the espoused to seph the carpenter; of royal descent, but humble and meek in a life hidden from the praise of men. We may not, and we need not, try to measure the purity and holiness of that Sanctuary in which the Most Highest condescended to make His tabernacle. Let no unseemly contentions disturb our reverent love for the Mother of our Lord. Enough for us to know that she was thus chosen, saluted as "Highly favoured," "Blessed among women," by an Angel from Heaven; that her cousin Elizabeth, when filled with the Holy Ghost, repeated the salutation of "Blessed among women;" and that she herself, by the same Spirit, rejoiced that all generations should call her "Blessed." We may at least think of her as the most perfect among the daughters of Eve, the most perfect example of womanhood. Little as Scripture tells us of her, it shews her, at least, perfect in humility, in faith, in submission to the Divine will. To take the words of our own Bishop Pearson: "We cannot bear too reverent a regard unto the Mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not the honour due unto God Himself."

Yet she was wholly unconscious of any worthiness. She was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. So is it ever with the saints. Not by their merit, but of His mercy, do they find grace, do they hope for glory.

26. The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Luke i, 30-38.



HE Angel hastens to calm her fears. He calls her by her name, and again assures her that she has found favour with God.

Then he proceeds to unfold his message in its fulness. This is the Divine favour towards her—that she shall become a mother; the Son whom she shall bear is to be called Jesus, or Saviour. He shall be greater than any child of mortal father, being the Son of the Highest; He shall be that Son of David, Jer. xxiii. 5–6, by whom the kingdom shall be restored to Israel, whose dominion shall endure throughout all generations. Dan. ii. 24.

Angel visitors had often before appeared to men, but never with any such message, never with assurance of like favour, never with promise of such a Son as this. And even as God has known her by

her name, Exod. xxxiii. 12, so He gives the name to the Son which shall be born of her. When God gives a name He gives also power to fulfil its meaning. He shall be called IESUS means that He shall LESUS the SAVIOUR, and He is to be the Son of God. She could not doubt now, with her knowledge of the ancient prophecies and her faith in their fulfilment, that she was chosen to be the Mother of Messiah, the Restorer of Israel as well is the Saviour of the world, the true David, to rule wer the true Israel of God. She could not doubt now that the ancient prophecies were fulfilled in her, or rather, through her, in her Son. her the Son of the Highest shall be born, a King to all eternity! What a trial for her faith, for her humility! Can these things be to her, a humble maiden, far below the rulers of this world, so unfitted, as they would judge, for this charge! Is she to be Mother of a King, the Eternal King, Mother of GOD? Perhaps she did not yet fully understand all this mystery. One difficulty at least she sees, wondering yet not doubting; and she asks, submissively, How shall these things be, seeing I know not a husband? Betrothed, but not wedded, how shall she be a mother?

Then the mystery of the miraculous conception is revealed to her. The order of nature is passed wer; the order of grace works the Incarnation of the Son of God. As the Holy Spirit overshadowed the face of the deep at the creation of the world,

so that same Spirit quickens the new creation in Christ. That Holy thing which shall be born of her shall not be the son of an earthly father. He shall be the Son of God; born of her, truly of her substance, receiving being and life from her, yet the Son of God!

In confirmation of his word the Angel informs her of the blessing granted to her cousin Elizabeth. With God nothing shall be impossible.

Mary asks no more. Humility, faith, submission, fill her soul. She believes. Behold the handmaid of the Lord—there is her humility! She is to be mother of the Lord, yet she will be His handmaid. Be it unto me according to Thy word—here is her submission! She has no wish but the will of God. And the Angel departed from her.

27. Mary visiting Elizabeth. St. Luke i. 39-45.



HE Angel, for the more confirmation of Mary's faith, related to her the wonderful work God had already wrought for her

cousin Elizabeth. What could Mary do now but arise with haste and gladness to convey and to receive the good tidings of great joy which these two holy women had to exchange with each other! She went from Galilee into the hill country of Judæa—probably passing through Jerusalem, and there in the Temple paying the first fruits of her thanks and joy—and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elizabeth.

voice of Mary no sooner sounds in her kinsn's ears than the Divine Spirit works a fresh For inasmuch as Mary was bearing within som that unborn Saviour who did not abhor irgin's womb, so His presence made itself to and adored by those to whom the secret was Elizabeth's unborn child leaped within joy, acknowledging his Lord and King by the g of the Spirit; bearing witness already, even should hereafter bear witness to the world. efore Mary herself could speak of the revewhich she had received of the Angel, that Holy Spirit filled the heart of Elizabeth, ng her that which Mary had come to impart. secret of the Lord is among them that fear and He will shew them His covenant. v. 14. And she spake out with a loud voice, up the Angelic salutation, though it had reached her ears: Blessed art thou among 1, and Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. less as she is, declared to be so by Him who eth the hearts, and therefore herself blessed. scribes the greater blessedness to another. eems herself all unworthy of such honour as he Mother of her Lord should come to her. lls of the joy of her unborn child, and then s the blessing. Blessed is she that believed; ere shall be a performance of those things were told her of the Lord.

'izabeth, the blameless mother of the greatest

of the prophets, Matt. xi. 11, thought so humbly of herself as to wonder that her Lord's mother should come to her, what must we think of the condescension of the Lord Himself thus coming down to earth, to dwell among us! what must we think of His continued condescension in leaving His Presence with us from generation to generation in His holy Sacrament! How humbly, how reverently should we prepare our souls to receive Him as our guest; how glad should be our song of thanksgiving!

And observe too the spiritual discernment of Elizabeth. Blessed indeed is Mary, mother of her Lord; but blessed first for this, that she hath be lieved the word of God through His Angel, and by faith hath attained the promise. Luke xi. 28. Without faith, Eve disobeyed and the world was lost. By faith, Mary bowed herself to the will of God, and was made the mother of the world's Redeemer.

28. The Song of the Blessed Virgin. St. Lukei. 46-56.

HE joyful salutation and prophecy of Elizabeth wakes a like strain of joyful praise and prophecy in the heart of Blessed Mary.

Her soul doth magnify the Lord; her spirit hath rejoiced in God her Saviour. For the name of JESUS signifies, God the Saviour. In this, and in the next verse, she again makes mention of her low estate. She is the handmaid of the Lord, though

uires of her things hard to believed. But had respect to her, looking upon her in avour. And from henceforth all generations ll her blessed.

and she shall be blessed, whatever cold and hearts may think and say. For He that is He that is Holy, hath made her great, doing great things. The Virgin bears a son, and is God.

t is not a deed of power and holiness which stroy the sinners. It is a shewing of mercy. t as of old to the chosen people alone. God taking that flesh and blood which belongs nen, that all may be one in Christ Jesus. re His mercy is on all them that fear Him, . This is the only condition—that they must m, that they must humble themselves before hat they must be hungry and thirsty and For He is a God of strength as well as of scattering the proud, putting down the sending the rich empty away. None shall nd Him; not the great ones of the earth, the mightiest of evil spirits, the thrones and ons, the principalities and powers of darkness.

15. As they have been cast down from 1, so shall they be cast down from their rule ankind. And the sinful race of men, who sen brought low even to the ground, who one hungering and thirsting and poor, for so prerations, shall be raised again, fed with the

Bread of Life and the Living Waters, in the Sacramental food of the Word made Flesh. Prov. ix. 1-5. They shall be enriched with the unsearchable of Christ, Eph. iii. 8, and be made to sit in Heavel places in Christ Jesus. Eph. ii. 6.

He hath remembered His mercy; remembered though doubting hearts might think He had for gotten; His mercy—for all is of grace and not of our deservings. And now He hath helped His servant Israel, laying hold of them by the hand to pluck them out of the grave; first coming to Israel after the flesh and revealing Himself to them that they might first be saved; then, by His servants, revealing Himself to the true Israel, to them who believe among all nations; according to His promise made to Abraham and his seed for ever. And who, once more, are Abraham's seed? If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. iii. 29.

There is the Gospel Story; told to her cousin Elizabeth by her whom God had blessed exceedingly. Well, therefore, may the Church sing this psalm in her evening worship; the nightly memorial of the Incarnation, a Eucharist is song.

For three months Mary was the companion of Elizabeth, these two the only possessors of the mighty secret which was to cast down Satan and to restore the world. Then Mary returned to he own house at Nazareth.

29. The birth of John the Baptist. St. Luke i. 57-66.

HE months had now run their course. Elizabeth became a mother. Her neighbours and kindred heard how the Lord had hewed mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with the street thus fulfilling the Angel's prophecy—that many should rejoice at his birth. As yet they anderstood not that he was the forerunner of the mag expected Messiah, or they would have rejoiced the more. But they guessed that he would prove to common child, being so wonderfully born.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the hild, to put that mark upon his flesh which God nd ordained for all the children of Abraham. Circumcision was to the Jew very much what aptism is to the Christian, although not nearly so all of blessing and grace. It was the sign and seal of God's covenant, by which the Jewish child as admitted into the congregation of His faithful people. The name was given at the same time. And they were calling him Zacharias, after his His mother at once interfered. He is not be called by the priestly name, as if he were to succeed his father in offering the sacrifices, and teaching the law, of Moses. He shall be called John the grace of the Lord—for he is to preach of the grace and truth which come by Jesus Christ. St. John i. 17.

It may be that her husband had made known

to her the whole of the angel Gabriel's message, either by signs, or by writing. It is still more likely that it had been revealed to her by the Holy Spirit. Her friends object in vain, reminding her that the name of John is unknown in her family. They appeal by signs to Zacharias. He replies in the same manner, asking for a writing table—a piece of thin board, covered with wax, on which letters were easily traced with any pointed instance. His name is John. Not "shall be," the is;" for the name had already been given from Heaven. Zacharias does not give it; he acknowledges that which has been already given.

Astonished at this, they are even more astonished at what follows. The punishment of dumbness, inflicted on him for his unbelief, is now removed. So many months dumb by miracle, he is now by miracle, suddenly made to speak. For in writing this name of John he has proved his faith. And he spake, not in murmurs against his punishment, but in praising God; for he could no longer doubt but that the Angel's words were all true. Unbelief a seals the heart and seals the lips. If we would praise God aright, we must first believe.

We are sure that Zacharias would go on to speak of all that God had revealed to him through his Angel. Astonishment would grow into fear. They would say one to another, "What hath God wrought?" Once more, Angels coming with messages to men! Once more, the voice of prophecy,

i miracles, and a wondrous birth! These sayings re noised abroad everywhere. And, wondering at manner of child this should be, men rememted, and watched, and waited for the time of his wing unto Israel. This, at least, they soon reived, that the hand of the Lord was with him.

1. The Song of Zacharias. St. Luke i. 67-80.

S his wife Elizabeth and the blessed Virgin had spoken by the Holy Ghost, so Zacharias receives the same Divine Inspiion. His praises of God are preserved for us in t Hymn, which the Church sings daily after reading of the Gospel Lesson. And it is proxy as well as praise. His eyes are fixed not much upon his own son as upon that Face of Lord, for whom John was to prepare the way. sibly he did not himself understand all that his rds convey to us. Possibly he did not sing his g in that clear acknowledgment of finished tation and redemption in which we sing it. For with the Books of the Holy Gospels and the Acts the Epistles before us, see how true these words , however closely we apply them. God had eed visited and redeemed His people; visiting earth and blessing it with plenteous redemption. lxv. 9; cxxx. 7. The Horn of Salvation, the blem and instrument of saving power, is raised in that house of David which had been so long otten and obscured. Salvation has come, from

the envy and malice of that old Serpent who has been at enmity with mankind through thousands of years. The holy covenant and oath and promises, from the beginning of the world till now, receive their fulfilment in a deliverance which sets the spirit free. The bonds of Satan, and sin, and death, are broken. Heb. ii. 15. The children of God shall walk henceforth in a glorious liberty. They shall no longer stand afar from the Altar of their God. so soiled by sin, so bound by its power, and so terrified by the threatenings of the law, that they exceedingly fear and quake. Heb. xii. 18-20. kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man shall shortly be manifested, Titus iii. 4, shedding abroad a perfect love which casteth out fear. Sanctified and justified, His people shall worship Him all the days of their life.

Then, the aged father, as Priest and Prophet, addresses his son, foreseeing his calling and his glory. To him it is given to publish these mercies. The Lord is at hand. Thou, child, shalt go before Him, preparing the way, turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5-6; a morning star before the Dayspring from on high, a burning and a shining lamp to them that sit in the darkness of death, a messenger and guide of peace.

These things the world had never known. No, nor yet the chosen people Israel. Now they are revealed by the Spirit. Ere long the sound shall

go into all lands; and the heathen shall hear the Gospel, and sing that song, whose first words give blessedness to God, whose last word is peace to men; even as the Angels sang, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace!

Scripture tells us no more of the parents of John the Baptist. Well stricken in years, they were soon called to their rest. But the hand of the Lord was on their son. He grew, and waxed strong a spirit. And in the loneliness of the desert, in cortification of the body, he thought upon God, and tarned heavenly mysteries, until the day of his hewing unto Israel.

.31. The Angel appearing to Joseph. St. Matt. i. 18-25.

E shall not fully understand the Blessed Virgin Mary's ready obedience and humility, unless we remember that the great favour which she found with God was likely to bring her into suspicion, if not dishonour, with men. She is betrothed but not wedded; and she is about to become a mother. What will Joseph think of her, that good man to whom she was espoused? There was real cause for anxiety on her part, lest he should distrust her, and take away her good name. The law was very severe upon any woman who dishonoured herself and her betrothed husband by unchastity. The punishment was death. She could only leave herself in God's hands, and trust

Him to make her righteousness as clear as the light.

Joseph was at first sorely perplexed. As a just man, he could not overlook such a fault, if she were guilty. At the same time, he would not behave with harshness towards her whom he had so respected and loved. His mind was to put her away privately, to leave her with her parents. Yet he would not act hastily. And while he thought on these things, without informing any one of his suspicions, and anxious to do what was just and merciful, he is freed from his anxiety by a message from Heaven. The Angel appears to him in a vision, telling him what Mary and Elizabeth had already learned from the Divine teaching; Joseph thou son of David—as if recalling to his memory the promise to David that God would set one of his seed upon the throne of Judah—fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife. She is called his wife, according to Jewish custom, although they are as yet espoused only, not married. She has not sinned. It is by the operation of the Holy Ghost that she shall be a mother.

Mark the wisdom and goodness of God in this. The Son of God must be born of a virgin. Yet her good name must be protected by the guardianship of a husband. Therefore, the wondrous fact is revealed to him, lest he should put her to shame unjustly; that he may shew her the respect due to the mother of his Lord, and that he might be as

an earthly father to her son. The Angel tells him, further, that that son is to be called Jesus; because his life would correspond with the name; He shall save his people from their sins.

All this was done, we read, for the fulfilment of the prophecies. Never let us forget this in the story of our Lord's life. It is one of the surest evidences of the truth of the Gospel. A virgin shall bring forth a Son. They shall call His Name Emmanu-el, God with us; for who can twe from sin, who can be the true Jesus in His wan power, but God?

All doubt had now passed from Joseph's mind. He at oncet ook Mary to his home, and gave her the same and position of wife. But ancient writers agree in saying, what our own natural reverence for the mother of Jesus instinctively supposes, that he was to her as a loving guardian and friend, and no more. Therefore we say, "Born of the Virgin Mary," as of one who though a mother, was spot-less in maiden purity, and ever virgin.

32. The birth of Jesus Christ. St. Luke ii. 1-7.

T this time few of the family of David remained; none at all who had any honour by reason of their royal birth. But the prophets had foretold that Christ should come of the seed of David according to the flesh. Therefore this must be established in the sight of men.

All the world was now in peace, under one earthly

ruler. And he, wishing to know his power, issued a decree that all his subjects should be taxed, or numbered, every one in his own city. Joseph, therefore, went up from his home in Galilee to the city of David, which is Bethlehem; that his name might be written down as belonging to that city, and to David's family. He took with him Mary, his espoused wife, now about to become a mother by the power of the Holy Spirit. was of David's royal line. Yet this brought them no respect or consideration; and they are compelled to content themselves with the shelter of a stable. God had regarded the low estate of His handmaiden; in the sight of men noblest birth and purest virtue is overshadowed by the meanness of poverty. There the lowly virgin mother brought forth her son; and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger. None have compassion upon her; none wait upon her and befriend her. She is as the lowest of the low, the poorest of the poor; mother of One who in after vears had not where to lav His head.

If they at Bethlehem had known! O mystery of mysteries, the WORD made Flesh, GOD manifest in the Flesh, nursed in his maiden mother's arms; in weakness, yet all-mighty; in nakedness, yet robed in glory; in helplessness, yet the Lord of Angels; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. 2 Cor. vi. 10. He who is Creator of all, King of Heaven, is content

to be reckoned as the subject of an earthly king. He is born in the city of David, for thus must the Scripture be fulfilled. He is born at Beth-lehem. the house of bread; for He is the true and living Bread which cometh down from Heaven. He is truly born, as true man, and the Seed of the Woman, of her substance, and nourished at her bosom; an infant, that He might pass through all he troubles of life from the beginning: a God. hat hideth Himself. Isa. xlv. 15. Wrapped in wathing bands now, even as He shall be wrapped 1 the shroud at His death. What a way for God o manifest Himself! This is indeed making limself of no reputation. How shall we dare boast of pride of birth, or wealth, or intellect, hen we see the Lord of all thus emptied of His lory? How shall we struggle for the pomp, and xury, and gratification of dress, and food, and mfort, when we see Him thus condescending to e meanest and hardest lot? And all this for us en, for us, when we were yet sinners! O come. t us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the ord our Maker.

Devoutly I adore Thee, Deity Unseen.

. The Mystery of the Incarnation; God manifest in the Flesh. 1 St. John i. 12; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

HE life of man before God must be a life of faith. All God's dealings with us are full of mystery. We see so much that we are

tempted to think that we see all, that we may trust our senses. This is one reason why the world has so often rejected the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church. The world fancies it sees, and knows, and understands all. At any rate it will not believe until it understands.

Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this strange thing which has come to pass. A young mother, in a stable, is bending over her new-born son. He has no better bed than the manger. An aged man, her husband, stands beside her, wondering. The inn close by is filled with guests, but they care for none of these things. Why should we care? Who is this mother? Who is this child?

We see one like unto other children, an earthly son naturally born of an earthly mother. That is all that we see. He is very man, of the substance of Mary, his mother. So far our senses tell us rightly.

Now faith will ask, "Is there no more to learn?" Hear the wondrous tale of the message brought to the blessed maiden as she knelt in her humble home at Nazareth, by the Angel who stands in the very presence of God. Her child is very man indeed, of a marvellous birth. But He is more. He is the Son of God. He is the Lord. Not as the Saints may be called the sons of God. Not by likeness to the Divine goodness; not by the power of God's gracious Spirit dwelling within Him. Far more

this, is *His* Sonship. He is of one substance God the Father Almighty. He is God Himself. 1e Word, which was God, is made Flesh and 1s among us. God has taken our nature upon . God is partaker of flesh and blood. Heb. . God is made like unto men in all things,

. God is made like unto men in all things, nly excepted. The Eternal Spirit hath clothed self in flesh. The Immortal God hath made self subject to death. The Son of Mary is MAN. He is also true GoD.

is hard to believe that a helpless infant is the nal God; that the woman kneeling over Him e mother of God. But this is the Catholic which except a man believe faithfully he cance saved. Jesus, the Son of Mary, is perfect and perfect man.

hy did God become Incarnate? that is, why lod take upon Him our flesh?

r these reasons :--

rst, that He might be the second Adam, the ming of the new Creation of God. He came the new head of mankind, making those who do be united to Him partakers of the Divine to. 2 St. Peter. i. 4. He came to be the new to the dead creatures, reversing the sentence of 1, crushing the Serpent's head.

condly, that He might be a sacrifice for sin; He might offer His spotless human nature to Father, in satisfaction for all the sins of the world. He came to reconcile God and man

in Himself, and make these two to be at one again, by His at-one-ment.

And, again, He came to be a perfect teacher of Divine wisdom, a perfect example of human obe-He came to make to Himself a Church, that by that Church the eternal purposes of wisdom and love might be made known to Heaven and Earth. Ephes. iii. 9-11. He was made flesh that all mankind, being born into the Church, which is His Body, might be planted in Him, and be nourished and preserved, until the time of the restitution of all things, when Satan shall be cast down for ever, and the new heaven and the new earth shall be created as a dwelling place of everlasting righteousness.

34. The Angels and the Shepherds. St. Luke ii. 8-20.



HE mystery which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God is now made known to the principalities and pow-

ers in heavenly places. Eph. iii. 9. The Father hath brought the first begotten into the world, and the decree goes forth, Let all the Angels of God worship Him. Heb. i. 6. If all the sons of God, the Holy Angels, shouted with joy when they saw the first Adam newly created in the image of God, much more will they rejoice now! Job xxxviii. 7. They will earnestly desire to carry the good tidings far and wide, through Heaven and through earth.

Who shall be chosen first to hear?

The Shepherd of Israel is first to be revealed to shepherds, humble men, faithful in their calling. To labour is to pray, says St. Augustine, and in this sense their life was a life of prayer, and of true service to God. The Angel appeared to them is they kept watch over their flock by night, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.

And they were sore afraid.

But it is not the fires of Sinai, nor the thunders of Divine wrath. It is the Gospel Story, good in things of great joy to them, and to all people. Not to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile. To you is born this day a Saviour, the Anointed, the Lord. The good tidings are so simply told that they need to explanation. And yet we wonder as we hear, almost as much as they must have wondered. They cannot doubt their eyes and ears.

Yet is this the fulfilment of prophecy? He is born in the city of David indeed. But is this the manner in which Christ the Son of David should be born? He was to be the King; the Angel says He is

more than King. He is Saviour and Lord. Yet laid in a manger!

No sooner is this spoken than a multitude of the heavenly army take up the song. Glory to God in the Highest; Peace on earth; Good will to men.

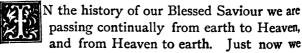
This is the joy of the Angels. This is the will of God for men. They shall live to His glory. They shall be at peace with Him and with themselves. Love shall rule upon earth.

They hasten at once to Bethlehem, on the wings of eager faith and desire. There they find even as the Angel had told them, Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Who can enter into the joy of those humble men? They are not offended at His lowliness; and when they depart they spread the good news far and wide, glorifying and praising God.

All that heard it wondered. For it was an astonishing tale, made the more wonderful as being revealed to these shepherds, yet hidden from the rulers. St. Luke xi. 21. It was the cause of increased wonder even to the blessed mother herself. She kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart, comparing them with what she had already learned.

We too would see Jesus. How shall we seek Him? In the way of humble diligence in our earthly calling. He will send us messages of love while we are doing our daily work, and will teach us where He may be found. We too would know His goodness and His will. How shall we learn it? By keeping His word in our heart, and meditating therein day and night.

35. The Circumcision of Jesus. St. Luke ii. 21.



read of Angels rejoicing and singing praise to the

Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. We go with the shepherds to worship Him, and we see a babe bying in a manger. We adore Him as the Lord tur Righteousness, the Giver of all Law. And now we find Him bowing even to this—that He is made under the law, and bound by all its burdens. What need for Him to submit to outward ceresonies? So we might speak. Yet He will endure And this for many reasons.

First, He will be obedient to the whole law, that me might find accusation against Him, as if He are a despiser of the Covenant which God had adde with Abraham. He would provide things onest in the sight of all men, giving no offence in mything. 2 Cor. vi. 3.

Again: He suffers the sharp pain of circumcision, as proving to us His Love, how great it is, that it rather desired, than shrank from, pain for our sake. His precious Blood was of such infinite value, that one drop would have sufficed for the world's salvation. Yet he will shed that blood, even on the eighth day. How shall we, with this before us, turn away coldly, and despise His love? How thall we seek only pleasant things, rest and ease, and fulness of bread, when He took up His Cross so early?

Again: Circumcision was not only pain, but it was disgrace; to Him, at least. It was, as it were, sking to be purified from the filth of the flesh, and to be admitted into God's family. Now in this

child there was no uncleanness to be done away, no need of asking for admission; for He was the very Son of God. What infinite humility! How can we, with His example, ever boast of our merit! How can we ever think of the ordinances of the Gospel as if we were too spiritual to need such things.

Again: by thus confirming the ancient rite, He makes us who are buried with Him in Baptism to have our share in that better circumcision which is made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, Col. ii. II; the circumcision of the heart; which is in the spirit, and not in the letter. Rom. ii. 29. And so He teaches us to mortify and kill all vices in us. He calls us to put away all fleshly lusts and earthly affections, no matter that the pain be sharp even like the cutting away of hand or foot, or the plucking out of an eye. St. Matt. v. 29-30. He teaches us that all suffering is, in some sense, a sacrament; that by it, if it be borne in humility and patience, and resignation to our Father's will, it makes us partakers with Christ. And therefore the Church in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick reminds the sufferer that "there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons than to be made like unto Christ by suffering patiently."

Henceforth circumcision was to be done away. For Christ, our Head, being circumcised, hath circumcised the whole man. He hath fulfilled the

aw, and we, in Him, are circumcised with the ircumcision made without hands; we are admitted mong the true Israel of God.

36. The Name of Jesus. St. Luke ii. 21; Phil. ii. 9-11.

HE circumcision of the Jew resembled the Baptism of the Christian in this also, that at this time the name was given to the ild. Mary's son therefore has his name now ven Him. They call His Name JESUS.

There had been others of that name before, men reputation. We know it in the Old Testament ider its Hebrew form of Joshua-Jah-Hoshea-Numb. iii. 16. One Ioshua. od the Saviour. d the people into the promised land, a captain, a nqueror, a giver of rest. Heb. iv. 8. Another shua is found, the High Priest, standing before e Angel of the Lord, while Satan stands at his tht hand to resist him. Zech. iii. 1. These are pes of the true Joshua, our JESUS, the Captain of r Salvation, the High Priest of our profession. r He alone is rightly named Jesus, even the eat God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Titus ii. 13. is was the Name given Him by the Angel: Divine assurance that He should be all that His me implied.

Therefore, knowing His Name, we know Him o bears it. And so we are not surprised at the quent mention of this Blessed, this Mighty

Name, this Name of Victory, of Salvation and of Love. The tongue of the preacher seems unable to refrain from it; the pen of the writer cannot omit it from his page. It is the Alpha and Omega. the beginning and the end of the New Testament, first and last in the Gospels, first and last in the Acts, in the Epistles, in the Book of the Revelation. It is the Name twice brought from Heaven by the Angel, the Name heard and beloved by the blessed maiden, of whom the holy Evangelists make mention as the Mother of Fesus: the Name which was given to Him as true Man, so binding Him to us as our brother, the accepted mediator between God and man; I Tim. ii. 5; the Name in which disciples went forth preaching everywhere, healing diseases, casting out devils, and raising the dead, and saving souls. It is the Name written above Him, as He hung upon the Cross. It is the Name of Him who died and rose again from the dead; who ascended, and was seen of the martyr Stephen standing at the right Hand of God; who even in His glory suffers with His persecuted Church; the same Jesus who shall return in power.

This sacred Name seems even to comprehend within itself all the love and power of the Father and the Holy Ghost. The truth as it is in Jesus is the whole doctrine of salvation. To believe in the Name of Jesus was to believe unto salvation; and to be baptized into this Name was to be baptized into the Name of the Holy Three in One.

It is the Name of infinite merit; the Name which is above every name; the Name at which every knee shall bow of things in Heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; the Name in which we pray, and praying in faith, obtain all that we would.

We hear the Name of Jesus, and we see Him whose Name it is, true God, true Man, Saviour and King. It is the Name we trust in; the Name we boe; the Name in which we boast; the Name by which we plead; the Name we worship, even world without end; the Name to cheer us in sadness, to kindle us in coldness, to refresh us in dryness, to strengthen us in weakness, to recover us in error, and to purify us in sin. Yea, in all our sorrows, and in all our joys, O Lord Jesus, by Thee only will we make mention of Thy Name.

37. The earthly descent of Fesus. St. Matt. i. 1-17. St. Luke. iii. 23-38.

T was of importance to the world, and to the Jew more especially, to know the earthly descent of the Son of Mary. There-

fore two of the Evangelists give us full information on this point. The list of names is not the same in both; we might almost say we have two distinct lines. This is easily explained; and we may be thankful that it is so.

St. Matthew, we must remember, wrote for the Jews. His first object, therefore, was to shew how our Lord fulfilled the prophecies concerning His

birth. He begins with "The book of the gener of Jesus Christ." In that word "Christ" he de that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and he Him, moreover, Son of David, and Son of Abra from both of whom the Messiah was to be scended. Gen. xxii. 18; Ps. cxxxii. 11. From first of these great names St. Matthew trace descent of Jesus, through David, until he brin to Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was Jesus who is called Christ. He proves that is the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David, I and King of the Jews.

St. Luke wrote with a different object. His pel was intended for the Gentiles, that is for al were not Jews. He desired to prove to them the Saviour of the world was in deed and in their brother, like themselves a son of Adam man. Therefore, to trace the line of Jesus Adam was to declare him the kinsman and be of all mankind. The Gentiles, when they re Luke's gospel would understand that Jesus ca save and to restore every child of Adam. would see that in Him all might receive the tion of sons, and, being sons of Adam, mig made also sons of God. Gal. iv. 4.

We need not vex ourselves about the differ in the names. Both preserve the descent Abraham and David. But there are two

t that of Mary. Why is this? Because Joseph d Mary were known to be of the same tribe and the same house. Therefore there was no reason departing from the Jewish custom of naming husband's family rather than the wife's.

it. Matthew brings in the names of four women. nab, known as the harlot, of Jericho, the accursed : Ruth, the Moabitess, of an unclean stockh these strangers to the Covenant with Israel: hsheba, an adulteress; and Tamar, who sinned he same way. Why does he, as it seems, go of his way to name these? To shew that Christ e to carry our sins, and would not shrink even a sin-stained race. To shew even to the 1d Jews, that the Gentiles were akin to Christ; : He takes the human nature of the sinner and outcast, and purifies it in Himself. Thus His nite mercy is declared. We are not of Abrai's seed: neither was Rahab nor Ruth. Yet of n Christ came. We are not pure from gross Neither was Tamar nor Bathsheba. Yet of n Christ came. Blessed assurance that He is to Kinsman and Brother, Purifier and Restorer!

The Coming of the Wise Men of the East. St. Matt. ii. 1-12.

HE Shepherds are not the only visitors who come to honour the new-born babe. The Light of the Gentiles makes His glory to the upon other faithful souls in heathen lands

who have been seeking after the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him.

St. Matthew does not tell us how soon after the Nativity the Wise Men came. The Church makes her commemoration of it on the twelfth day, which she observes as the Festival of the Epiphany, or Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Thus in His cradle He confirms the words of His Angel that the good tidings are for all people.

These Wise Men saw the star in the East, and by divine teaching they understood that it was the star of the new-born King of the Jews. With a pious affection they follow its guiding light through a long and weary journey. At last they arrive at Jerusalem, and ask where He may be found, for, they say, they are come to worship Him. They expect, very naturally, that all the world knows where the Son of their King is to be found.

No one has heard of His birth. Herod is King. No such son has been born to him. He enquires of the rulers of the Jewish Church, and they refer him to the prophecy of Micah, ch. v. 2. The Ruler of Israel shall come out of Bethlehem. Herod tells the wise men what the rulers have said, and sends them forth again on their journey, deceitfully bidding them bring back word when they have found Him, and where. None of the Jewish rulers offer to accompany the strangers. But they are not left in uncertainty. Again the star appears, guiding them to the very house where the young child was.

reatly rejoicing, they fall down and worship i, presenting unto Him their gifts, gold and kincense and myrrh. Now all these had a ning. Myrrh, being very bitter, was an emblem uffering; and on account of its preserving ers it was used for the embalming dead bodies, John xix. 39. It was therefore a fitting gift for who was to suffer and to die. Gold was the ite paid to a King. Frankincense was an lem of prayer. And to whom should prayer hade but to God? By these gifts they acknowed that He whom they worship is true man, ect to death; a chief among men, as King; a rover men, as God.

onsider the faith and zeal of these men, in wing the leading of a star across the wide iless deserts; never doubting, although the s could tell them nothing of their new-born g. Consider their humility as they bow before i, in His manger bed. And do not forget the acter of their gifts. If heathens sought Him this faith and diligence and devotion, how ht we to seek Him! What gifts ought we to g Him? Let us bring instead of myrrh, a it ready to suffer and to die for Him. For l let us offer faith, more precious in His t than the gold which perisheth. And let incense of our prayer rise continually before 1. For He is our Propitiation, our King, and God.

39. The Purification of the Blessed Virgin, and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. St. Luke ii. 22-24.



LL the children of Adam are born in sin.

This sad truth was ever kept before the eyes of God's chosen people by the require

ments of His law. Every mother remained apart, as unclean, for many days, Levit. xii; and when the days of her Purification were accomplished she went up to the Temple to offer the appointed offerings, according to her means. If her child were a son, and a firstborn, he was solemnly presented to the Lord; placed in the hands of the Priest, then given and received back again on payment of a few pieces of silver. Exod. xiii. II-16.

But with the mother of Jesus there was no uncleanness. She had conceived without sin. Her son was the Holy One, the Son of God. Nevertheless she takes her place with the other mothers of Israel, just as if she needed purification from a sinful birth. She brings her lowly offering, as one of the poor, the pair of turtle doves.

And then she makes that other offering which the law required, presenting her son to the Lord. Never since the world began had such a sacrifice as this been seen. She, who is too poor to bring a lamb, brings the true Lamb, the LAMB OF GOD. While His mother presents Him, He also presents Himself, a living sacrifice of body, soul, and spirit,

the perfect obedience of His Life. This is the orning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The eveng sacrifice is to be offered on the Altar of the ross, in the perfect obedience of His Death. And we He is contented to be bought back at a low ice, even as He was afterwards contented to be lid by Judas for thirty pieces of silver.

Mark again the humility of His mother. She is incurred no uncleanness. Why need she ask r purification? What good is this ordinance to re? It is the good which loving humble obedience ways brings. She honours God by her obedience; le blesses her with His approval and His love. low different from that proud spirit of the world and of the flesh, which makes a calculation of all digious observances! Now-a-days men ask of ublic worship, of prayer, of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar—"What good is all this?" They see to the blessing. They crave none. And so they keive none.

But still more, wonder at *His* humility. He is urried, presented, bought back, His mother's fering. So He gives Himself to her love, that he may do with Him as she will. And so He we Himself up into the hands of His enemies, to offered upon the Cross by a cruel death. He is Heaven now, and yet He stoops, giving Himself to our love, and to our contempt. What is the crament of His Body and Blood, but His esence with us that we may, in these holy

mysteries, present His death before the Father, in and receive Him back to the strengthening and so refreshing of our souls? And what is all wilful sin, let the crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to open shame? Heb. vi. 6. We treat the Lord Jesus now just as we please. As little while, and the patient Saviour will be among us in His power. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and so ye perish. Ps. ii. 12.

40. The Song of Simeon. St. Luke ii. 25-35.

HE parents of the child Jesus had brought Him into the Temple to do for Him after the custom of the law. There was nothing

remarkable in the appearance of that little company—an aged man, a young mother a child of six weeks old. Many must have seen them, and passed them by unnoticed. For none could come unto Him and know Him, unless drawn by the Father. St. John vi. 44. And some there were so drawn, who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, led by the Spirit of God, being the children of God. Simeon is first mentioned among these one like the parents of John the Baptist, just and devout. Of old the promise had been given, To him that ordereth his conversation right will I shew the salvation of God. Ps. l. 23. This promise was now to be fulfilled to him. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he should see Christ in the flesh before his departure. Long He had waited. This pirit led him into the Temple, and opened see what was hidden from so many. s the infant Jesus in His arms. The longope of his life is accomplished. lepart now; for his soul is at peace. seen the Salvation of God. Not the eyes only, but of his soul also. The Spirit has 1 that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, elieving we have life in His Name. re the aged Simeon blessed God for the ichsafed to him. At the same time he hing of the length and breadth and depth of the Saviour's love and power. He this child came bringing salvation; a prepared before the face of all the nations. fancied that God was the God of the But oh, how wrongly did they think ernal love! It was prepared before all men. Not that all would receive it! Yet as for them, prepared; to be laid open ir eyes. The child Jesus was come a ghten the Gentiles. St. Paul says—the and afterwards the Gentile. Simeon puts : first. As if the Jew's day of visitation t that moment! As if the Jew would st—as indeed he did—and the Gospel be o the Gentile. And as if the fulness of the nust first come in, and worship in the ne light; and then, but not till then, all saved. Rom. xi. 25-26.

Again the minds of Joseph and his mother are disturbed by these wondrous sayings. The aged saint turns to them, and blesses them; blesses them, even while he foretells of bitterness and agony to come upon the blessed mother. Her son shall be for the fall and rising again of many, for death a well as for life, for the searching and laying opend many hearts. Heb. iv. 12. She herself, while she rejoices in God her Saviour, and looks forward to His glory as King upon the throne of David His Father, shall weep tears of blood over His Cross and passion. So have the prophets spoken. So does Simeon speak by the Holy Ghost. And asit was with the mother of Jesus so shall it be with those who are nearest and dearest to Him. can enter into His glory, unless they first pass under the shadow of His Cross.

41. Anna, the widow of fourscore and four years. St. Luke ii. 36–39.



HERE is yet another of these just and devout persons to be admitted to see the Lord's Christ, the aged Anna. She too

was among those who waited for the Consolation of Israel, and hers had been, indeed, a long waiting. She must have been more than a hundred years old, for after seven years of married life, she had endured a widowhood of fourscore and four years.

What had been her occupation through this long widowhood? Her home had been the Temple;

er food, fastings; her work and her rest, prayers. he was the pattern of holy widowhood; for she hich is a widow indeed, continueth in supplicaons and prayers night and day. I Tim v. 5. er fastings and her prayers went up like the fastgs and prayers and alms of Cornelius, for a emorial before God. Acts x. 4. It is written at she served God in them; therefore we know that e fruit of her lips, thus offered, was an acceptable rifice before Him. She was doing His will on rth as it is done in Heaven by the glorified saints stand before the throne of God, and serve im day and night in His Temple. Rev. vii. 15. ie was a prophetess, moreover, taught by the oly Spirit; and now, being led by the Spirit to e and to know the Salvation of God, she in her rn breaks forth into a song of praise and thanksving. The widow prophesies, even as the virgin id the wife have prophesied, and aged Simeon, at no sex and no profession may be wanting. Great is the favour thus accorded to her! ho so likely to find the Saviour as they who seek im thus, in the House of God, and with unceasing rayer? Thus it was that the Psalmist found light this trouble. Then thought I to understand this. lut it was too hard for me, until I went into the anctuary of God. Then understood I. Ps. lxxiii. 5-16. And having found her Lord, she carried he good news to her friends, and spake of Him to ill them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

We may surely believe that she is set before as a pattern to be followed by some at least, in let at life of self-denial, intercession and contemplation. The favour bestowed upon her assures us that such a life is neither selfish nor unblest. Far from this it wins blessings flowing on into other pious hearts, though they be not called to the same close conmunion with God. But what does the world say a of such a widowhood, or of the unmarried life so The world is quick to say that consecrated? 'labour is prayer.' It forgets that other truth, that 'prayer is labour.' The sister who sat at Jesus' feet had chosen the good part which should not be taken away from her. Let Martha serve her Lord, with much serving if she will. His blessing is doubtless upon her, upon maiden, wife, and widow, labouring diligently to His glory in her worldly calling. Only let her not grudge against her sister, if Mary departs not from the Sanctuary, preferring to serve God with fastings and prayers night and day. For there Mary may find blessings and graces, which the world has hidden from Martha's eyes and ears, and may come forth to speak of them. And so both may rejoice.

42. The Flight into Egypt. St. Matt. ii. 12–15; 19–23.



N the meantime Herod was expecting the return of the Wise Men to Jerusalem. But in vain. Being warned of God in a dream

parted to their own country another way. secrets of all hearts lie open before the g God, and He foreknew what Herod o in the madness of his suspicion and fear. i's whole life had been stained with blood-Therefore he was not likely to spare ld marked out by popular feeling as the ing of the Jews. But what can the cunning malice of man avail against the wisdom ver of the Almighty? The Wise Men are their way homeward. And before Herod e to give orders for the execution of his rposes the young child and his mother are the land of Egypt. There they remained relye months, until the death of Herod. angel of the Lord is with Joseph with con-

angel of the Lord is with Joseph with conwarnings and guidance. By his direction me out of Egypt, and passing by Judæa, he cruel Herod had been succeeded as king qually cruel son Archelaus, they turn aside own city, Nazareth.

Iatthew in this chapter refers to four es as fulfilled by the Messiah. The Ruler was to be born in Bethlehem. Micah v. 2. called His Son out of Egypt. Hosea xi. 1. te of Rachel was heard weeping for her Jer. xxxi. 15. Messiah shall be called a e. The first was a direct prophecy, simply lently fulfilled. The second and third, as

them in the Old Testament, read more like

plain statements of fact. But they had also second and further signification. Israel is cal God's son, God's chosen and beloved; and into as in so many other points, Israel—the with people, that is—was a type of God's Son, His obegotten. The Jews of later times would expect to see their own history reproduced in the life their Messiah. These little things may seem for ful to a worldly spirit. To the Jew they mean great deal. And St. Matthew, writing for Jewish Christians, is taught by the Holy Spirit draw their attention to these points of resembla

The prophecy, He shall be called a Nazaren nowhere to be found in the writings of the covenant. This need not, however, perplex St. Matthew refers to it as spoken by the propl It may have been spoken, but not written; treas up in the memories of those who looked for I siah, and now built into his Gospel by the E gelist, even as St. Paul has saved for us won our Lord which none of the four had written & —It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Yet the word Nazareth is sometimes interposent the City of Branches, and He who was called Nazarene is spoken of by the prophets as Netzer, or Branch, who should spring from roots of Jesse. Isa. xi. I. The name was a of reproach then, St. John i. 45-46. But now it has stood above His dying head, we reconly as a name of honour. It was by the Nat

is the Nazarene that Peter and John worked first great miracle after the day of Pentecost, is Name that they testified boldly before the ts and rulers. Acts ii. 22; iii. 6; iv. 10.

The Holy Innocents. St. Matt. ii. 16-17.

REAT was Herod's wrath when he found tha the had been mocked by the Wise Men. His decision is prompt; his action marked the same cruelty which had stained his whole This new born King of the Jews must die. ere is something very awful in the coldness of hief Priests and Rulers and the cruelty of If they had had any faith, any curiosity much more if they had been waiting for the plation of Israel, they would have gone with Wise Men to Bethlehem. But they can be s to others without entering into life them-, preaching to others, yet themselves cast They know the Scriptures, that Christ d be born at Bethlehem. Yet these things to them as idle tales. They regard them not. the little trust that Herod placed in the Wise s story only leads him to suspect some plot st his power; and so he fights against God. not the having Jesus among us which saves It is the light which He sheds into our hearts. our willingness to seek Him.

erod was perhaps afraid of making further enes. They might draw public attention to the visit of the Wise Men, and to their expectation finding a new-born King of the Jews. A whole slaughter of the young children will answer purpose. There is mourning among the mott of Bethlehem over the murdered innocents, a the days of old. It was near Bethlehem t Rachel was buried, and under her name Jeren represents the Jewish mothers weeping over t children carried away captives into the land of enemy. Herod now deems himself secure. Wi a year he is in his grave.

The prophet, even while he tells of the mot tears, brings assurance of consolation. consolation is needed, it is by those who w the bed of the suffering child, or weep over little bud so early plucked. We understand suffering should follow upon wilful sin. lambs what have they done? Thou knowes Heavenly Father, in Thy wisdom. In Thy Thou doest all things well. We leave this my in Thy keeping. We shall know hereafter. we need not doubt, if we will but remember under God's good Providence, suffering works For even the Captain of our salva fection. was made perfect through suffering. Heb. ii Neither is an early death that evil which men think it to be. Blessed are they who serve Go their generation. Yet not unhappy they who taken away from the evil to come. The I of His gracious election, laid His Cross upon t t flowers of martyrdom before they were old th to refuse the evil and choose the good. ch commemorates them as the Holy Innocents. yrs in deed although not in will, the undefiled, follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, the uits unto God and to the Lamb, being found out fault before the throne of God. Rev. xiv. In that vision all our doubts are removed, all ears are dried. We trust our little ones in suffering, and in their death, to the Good herd who carries the Lambs in His bosom. have not wilfully sinned away the grace of baptism. And He who said, "Suffer the little ren to come unto me," as He has accepted for His own in life, will give them a place near im in eternity.

The Childhood of Fcsus. St. Luke ii. 40.

HE Holy Evangelists end their account of our Blessed Lord's infant years with the return of His earthly parents to their old in Galilee. A thick cloud lies over the ry of the next few years. We have lost from sight this Divine Child, on whom our eyes been fixed with so much wonder, so much a, and so much love. The silence of Scripture surprising as its revelations. Here we should expected to see the pattern of a perfect home; parents ruling in all wisdom and tenderness, son obeying in all affection and respect. We

think how parents might have learned for themselves how to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We think how they might have shewn to their little ones the perfect pattern of childish innocence and love. wisdom has not thought this good for us. Yet we cannot help drawing the picture for ourselves: A home like many another godly home among the people of God. The head of that family an aged man, just and loving; the mother young and gentle; both watching with a rare watchfulness over the child committed to them by the Father in heaven. And that child! they who watched Him would find in Him none of those faults which so often spoil the beauty of childhood's grace. In the child Jesus was no impatience, no unwillingness to obey, no hasty temper, no unkind word, no wilfulness or waywardness. But perfect love towards all, love most perfect towards His Blessed mother. wisdom beyond His years, an eagerness in hearing of what God had done in the time of old, whether the tale were told him by some wise teacher of the law or read from the sacred books. So He grew from infancy to the age of twelve years. waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was upon Him.

These words are simple enough if they were written of any common child. But they are written here of Him who is the very Word of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;

whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bedily. Col. ii. 3, 9. What room is there for bowth in such an One?

Remember that He is true man as well as true bd; son of Mary as well as Son of the Highest. herefore in His human body, and mind, and soul, e must grow as other children of men grow. Let infant frame must be nourished with food. In must the childish mind learn by experience rough the seeing eye, and the hearing ear. That man soul must learn obedience by the things sich He suffered. By pain He learned patience. It weaknesses reliance on God. He had emptied imself of His glory. Now He is being filled.

Thus even in His earliest childhood we observe e reality of the human nature which He took to Himself in union with the Divine nature. He to was perfect man must needs be perfect child; all points like unto us, yet without sin. What rent will not pray for his children that they may ow like to that perfect pattern of us all, strong in irit, filled with wisdom, with the grace of God ed abundantly upon them!

45. Fesus with the Doctors in the Temple. St. Luke ii. 41.

HE parents of the child Jesus were accustomed to go yearly to Jerusalem to the Passover, in obedience to the Law of Moses.

eut xvi. 16. And as soon as Jesus was twelve

years old they took Him with them. For at this age the Jewish boy passed into the ranks of the young men, and being admitted to higher religious teaching, received the new name of "Son of the Law." These Festivals were seasons of great rejoicing and refreshment to every pious Jew. But His first Passover would in this case have a far deeper interest to the son than to the parents. He would see in the Holy City the scene of His future ministry and rejection. In the sacrifices and religious observances He would recognise the types of that which He Himself would, in the course of a few years, fulfil. The Temple is His Father's House, and He is loath to leave the sacred walls.

When the seven days of the Festival have expired, the strangers begin their journey homeward. There is a goodly company returning to Nazareth, and it is not till the evening that Joseph and his mother ascertain that Jesus is not with them. Their anxiety then is extreme. They retrace their steps to the Holy City, but only after three days do they find Him. He is in one of the side chambers attached to the Temple and used for religious instruction; sitting among the teachers; a humble learner, He who knew all things!

Herein He sets an example to all Christian children; He reminds all Christian parents of their duty. He is neither too old, nor too great, nor too proud, to sit at the feet of God's ministers and learn from them. Already the wisdom with which

lis soul is filled, reveals itself to the delight id amazement of the bystanders. His parents, o, are amazed when they see Him. Has He no night for their anxiety that He should remain hind, so unconcerned? His mother remonstrates they and sorrowfully. Why has He thus dealt he them?

t was strange, indeed, that He should be so taken with this new pleasure; strange, at least, to her. haps, after these many years of unbroken quietishe had almost forgotten the prophecy of eon that the sword should pierce through her soul also. Perhaps, in His perfect obedience er, she was losing sight of His duty to a Father Heaven. She speaks to Him of an earthly er. And He replies in words which carry our ights from man to God. How is it that ye ght me? Could you not understand that I must about my Father's business—or, as some interim my Father's House? She had spoken of father. He speaks of another.

lis words really signify that He is the Son of I, sent into the world to do the will of His her and to finish His work; sorely straitened t should be accomplished. This once between infancy and His full age, the Godhead of the d shines forth from the face of Mary's child. Sonce He manifests Himself that men may stand their watch tower, and look for the day of His ving unto Israel.

46. The Subject life at Nazareth. St. Luke ii. 51.

NO we ever try to think out what the early years of our Blessed Lord must have been to Him?—what a check He must have put upon all His actions and words, His very thoughts and desires? Only this moment He has spoken as if asserting His freedom from the authority which His mother has claimed over Him. As if He must go forth in the name of His Father to work, to teach, to do His Father's business in His Father's House. It seems as if this were so. His Father's will was that He should yet delay His ministry of Love and Power. His time is not yet come. He must be for eighteen more years all that a son should be to a mother. Without any further request on her part He quits His Father's House, and accompanies them to Nazareth. And He was subject unto them.

Nothing more is told us of His youth and early manhood. A journey to Jerusalem; three days' stay in the Temple; a few mysterious words spoken to His sorrowing mother; a homeward journey to Nazareth; His continued obedience, and His growth in mind and body; that is all! Again the veil is dropped. All is dark and still. Joseph is never again mentioned as His guardian; therefore we suppose that Joseph died soon after this journey to Jerusalem, and that the Blessed Mother was supported by the labours of her son. After He

begun His ministry the Jews showed their scorn lis lowly birth and occupation. How knoweth man letters, having never learned? Is not this arpenter? St. Mark vi. 3.

id yet He must have been known for more this at Nazareth, for it was often His lot on abbath day to stand up in the Synagogue for id. St. Luke iv. 16. This, however, sums up at we know. It amounts to this, that Jesus or the first thirty years of His earthly life a ent at Nazareth, following the humble trade of penter; subject to his parents; on His supfather's death working with His own hands port His widowed mother; a constant attenand a frequent minister in the house of prayer. eper and deeper grows the mystery, higher and is the example. He who is King of Kings pject to a weak woman. He, by whom all 3 were made, who stretched out the heavens His fingers, working with the saw and the plane. the wages which may purchase His mother's He who is the brightness of the er's glory walks unmarked, a poor man among men. He who is the Eternal Priest in the enly Temple does not even take the place of riest offering sacrifice in the Temple, but in a ogue of an obscure village stands up as a ger, at the beck of the minister, to read in the of the Law or the Prophets.

t men, with this example before them, throw

off the restraints of home as early as they can; leave father and mother in loneliness and poverty, it may be; despise humble labour, or labour to make provision for the lusts of the flesh! They turn their backs upon the Altar of God, or perhaps scarce even set foot within His House; and then call themselves followers of Jesus of Nazareth!

47. The hidden life at Nazareth. St. Luke ii. 51.



HE life of Jesus of Nazareth was a subject life, wonderful in its obedience. It was no less wonderful as being a hidden life, a life

of long self-restraint in the hiding of His power. We see nothing yet done for the accomplishment of His great work. We say with the prophet, in our wonder, Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour! Isa. xlv. 15.

Yes, He was the Saviour; come into the world that the world through Him might be saved. This was His Father's will. This was His own will. His whole ministry shews us one eaten up with zeal for the glory of God, and for the salvation of souls And yet for thirty years His voice is hushed, His hand is still. The Great Work, purposed from all eternity, begun in the Incarnation, is stopped—as far as man can see—through the hiding of the Mighty Worker. It is wonderful. Think of the sick who might have been comforted, the ignorant who might have been taught, the sinners who might have been

converted! He was at hand, the Saviour. Why does He not manifest forth His Glory, and save?

Is it not because part of His work was to do the will of His Father in the perfect obedience of perfect man? All men had sinned. He must cure in by obedience. He must sanctify the sinful will of men by His obedient will. Thus He was already working and winning the salvation of a wined world, as he lived his lowly life of labour at vazareth, subject to Mary and Joseph.

Thus, too, He was setting us the perfect example or all ages of life. We do not know the particulars I His daily steps. But this we do know, that in I that man has to do and to suffer, He did, and affered, and conquered. The child, the youth, the lan, knows that in Jesus of Nazareth his own emptations were endured and overcome; his own re adorned with the holiness of the Son of God.

Thus, too, we have the assurance of His sympathy. it is was in all points tempted like as we are, yet ithout sin. And in that He hath suffered, being mpted, He is able to succour them that are mpted. Heb. iv. 15; ii. 18. He feels for us, with the will supply exactly the very grace we need, id at the right time, when our need is sorest, and it strength and courage fails.

And, again, we learn from His hidden life not to impatient, but to wait God's time. We are apt make great mistakes about zeal, especially about ligious zeal. We see work which we think wants doing. Straightway we run to do it. But perhaps God does not will it to be done yet. Perhaps He does not intend us to have the doing of it. We cannot stop to think of this.

And so men try to do God's work, without thinking about God's will. So men push themselves into the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, for instance, without waiting for God's call. So they break the unity of the Church by their impatience. So—for this is what it comes to—they find fault with God, and set Him right in the doing of His own work. If the Lord Jesus could wait thirty years at Nazareth, can we not be patient, and trust God to do His own work in His own time, and in His own way?

48. The life of labour at Nazareth. St. Luke ii. 51.

E must linger yet a little longer over this

verse.

The life of Jesus at Nazareth was a life not of obedience and self-restraint only, but of labour also. From what is written of Him, in His ministry, it is clear that He was known only as a humble member of a humble family. His brethren are quite as much astonished as the rest when He shews Himself as a worker of miracles, and a teacher of the people. They did not believe in Him. They said that He was beside Himself. He had never put Himself forward as a diligent student. When He is teaching in the Temple, the

sk in surprise, "How knoweth this man having never learned?" St. John vii. 15. see things serve to shew that the life of s a child and as a young man was spent in inary occupations of his station, and that, carpenter's son, he worked with Joseph. e question "Is not this the carpenter, the Mary?" would lead us to suppose that the was better known than the son, and that, being dead, Mary was dependent upon the and earnings of Jesus.

and more wonderful! The world bows efore wealth and power. It can acknowledge in dignity, a certain heroism, in suffering, rtyrdom. But to stoop to severe and painis to the world the lowest dishonour; to on a pittance hardly earned by menial is, by some, thought only one degree less eful than theft.

this His thought? No. So far as the eyes a could see His life, it was labour for port of Himself and His widowed mother. In made the world by Almighty wisdom and stooped to all the little matters of handinal with soiled and blistered hands earned eived the poor man's wages.

He not by this shed a light and glory upon ur. If He, the Highest, stooped thus, can it nonour to us to do the same? The dislies in the being ashamed of what the Son of God has hallowed and glorified by His touch.

Yet was there no other labour in His life at Nazareth? Was He so taken up with this that He wholly put aside His higher calling? Surely not. We know that He was in the habit of reading the lessons in the Synagogue. We know that He showed a perfect knowledge of the Scriptures. And we have no reason to suppose that He attained to this knowledge by His Divine nature alone. Jesus, like Timothy, must have been taught at a mother's knee, learning as our children learn, studying as our students study. Think, too, of His whole nights spent in prayer while the disciples slept. This devotion could not have been confined to His later years. There was a hidden life at Nazareth, hid with God, from the eves of men. They who saw Him, marked His growth in body and in mind, the gentleness and beauty of His character. Yet for all this, during those thirty years He was no more to the men of Nazareth than the carpenter's son, the son of Mary. There stood one among them whom they knew not.

49. Mcditation. St. Luke i. 29; ii. 18, 19, 51.

E say that Jesus, as a child and as a young man, attracted no attention among his brethren and acquaintance. But we must

not forget that there were in His own home eyes which watched Him with eager interest, hearts

ich noted all His words and actions, meditating er the past, expectant of the future. The first utation of the Angel had troubled the Blessed aiden, and she cast in her mind what manner of lutation this should be. This surprise is not sened by the revelation which follows. Joseph his turn thought with anxious perplexity upon e approaching birth of Mary's child. Four times e Angel of the Lord instructs Him how to act for e preservation of the mother and her son. The eeting between the Blessed Virgin and the aged izabeth-the birth of John-the visit of the epherds to the new-born King at Bethlehem, at bidding of the Angel—the strange reply of her 1 to her as in her anxiety she gently rebuked m-filled their hearts with awe. They could not derstand. But Mary kept all these things, and ndered them in her heart.

This was one part of her special blessedness it she heard the word of God and kept it. The ne blessedness, too, may be ours, if we, when we are the word of God, or see His marvellous works, ep them and ponder them in our hearts. This is every precious means of communion with God, well of salvation from which all may draw water, is is, indeed, an exercise of the soul without which cannot grow.

We call it, commonly, *Meditation*. It is a frequent actice enough with us all in our worldly matters, in anything which is of great importance or

interest to us. We meditate, or think long and seriously, upon our business, our losses and gains, our pleasures, our friends, our hopes and fear. Why should our meditation be confined to the things of this world? Why should we not meditate, as blessed Mary did, and as all the Saints have done, upon the things of the world to come.

We often complain that we cannot understand God's word, or God's ways. But, even while we complain that they are too hard, we dismiss them from our mind. If we only kept these things, and pondered them in our hearts with prayer, God would reveal to us many a long-hidden mystery.

There is no reason why every Christian should not give a few minutes every day to meditation.

Choose a quiet time, and with a prayer for the Holy Spirit's teaching, read a few verses of your Bible. Then fix your attention as well as you can, and try to fill up what you have been reading. If it be part of the Scripture narrative, try to bring it with all its circumstances before your mind's eye. If it be a passage of commandment, or of instruction, try to think it out, what it bids you do, or believe. Examine yourself whether you have obeyed it, or believed it. Pray for the grace of understanding, of obedience, and of faith. And end with a resolution that this reading and meditation of God's holy word shall be in your heart good seed bringing forth good fruit.

Then go, and carry your thought into action.

PART IV.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

o. The Voice in the Wilderness. St. Mark. i.

HE strange events which had taken place at Jerusalem and at Bethlehem in connection with the birth of those two wondrous chil-

he son of Zacharias wondered what manner of child his should be. Those who saw and heard of the son of Mary would be full of expectation for the day then He should manifest forth His glory. But as ne was hidden at Nazareth, so the other withdrew himself into the deserts. Year after year passed. Death would carry away many to whom those things had been made known. Some would forget, ome grow weary with watching. The bright light had gleamed but for a moment. Now the thick clouds had again closed over their heads.

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, the Jews were startled by the appearance of a new and strange preacher. His long hair hung down over his shoulders, for he was a Nazarite; Numb. vi; his clothing was a camelskin fastened with a leathern girdle; his food locusts and wild honey. Strange as his appearance was, his message was stranger still, very different from the quiet teaching of the Scribes; Repentye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. It was the son of Zacharias. But what could he have to say, he who had never sat at the feet of the expounders of the law?

They would soon know. Alone in the deserts, far from men, in undisturbed communion with God, his school had been solitude and mortification, his books prayer and meditation, his teacher the Holy Spirit Himself. There, like Elijah, he had listened and learned. There, too, he had observed mankind afar off, so as to be able to rebuke in words of fire. Little were they prepared for his message as he burst upon them thus. Yet they knew the prophecies. They knew that before Messias appeared, His messenger should come before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah; St. Matt. xvii. II. If they could have received it, here Elijah was.

St. Mark's opening words are remarkable. We interpret them as meaning that the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is to be found in those ancient prophecies long since spoken, now fulfilled in the witness and message of John. The original promise, repeated again and again

more largely and distinctly, is now about to be fulilled. The beginning of the end is heard in the mice of the forerunner. And this is the Gospel; The Lord is at hand. The true Light is coming ato the world, the very Light of Life. The reaching of John the Baptist was intended to rouse the Jewish people to prepare themselves for Christ's mming. Else how should they know Him? how rofit by His presence? If this message was necesary before the Saviour's coming in great humility, now much more necessary is it before the Judge's ming in power and great glory! Day by day the hurch calls her children to watch and pray. What reed do we pay to her warnings? What preparation we making?

I. The preaching of Repentance. St. Luke iii. 1-6.

OHN the Baptist's ministry was preparation.

He came preaching that the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, was at hand.

This, in itself, was startling to the Jews. They had always believed themselves to be the people of God. Their whole religious life was founded on this conviction—that they were within that kingdom. Now the first words of this new preacher cut at the root of all their assurance. He speaks as if a new revelation was now given, as if a new covenant was to be entered into. He lays down the conditions, as it were, of admittance into this kingdom. All must repent. There must pass over them a

true hearty sorrow for sin. The easy formal life they have been living is not sufficient. They must feel, in their inmost hearts, that they are sinners, that they need forgiveness and conversion. And then they must make a public profession of their sorrow; they must receive from his hands baptism as a sign of repentance and forgiveness.

To us there is nothing very strange or painful in the Baptist's words. We are taught daily by the Church services our need of repentance and confession of sin, our need of daily forgiveness for daily faults. We long for forgiveness, and bow our heads as the Priest pronounces absolution and remission of our sins. But to the Jews, and especially, to the rulers, this message was very humbling. Baptism was a ceremony used only with the converts from among the heathen. It marked their separation from their old life and associations, their admittance into a new and better society. It was a sort of death to the past, a birth to a better future. very well," the Jews would say, "for a poor creature turning from idols to serve the living and true God! Far too humbling for us!" Yet this was the cry of the voice in the wilderness.

The invitation found an echo in many hearts. From the whole land the lowly, the sinful, men and women of the worst classes, went forth, listening eagerly, moved to repentance, confessing their sins, seeking baptism, comforted with forgiveness. The Scribes and Pharisees, the religious teachers, cannot

resist the impulse. Curiosity, perhaps a better feeling, urges them to go out and listen also. Then is heard the message in all its sternness. John calls them a generation of vipers, children of the old Serpent. He preaches repentance for all; repentance for them as for the worst! Scribe and Pharisee, publican and harlot, all alike must repent, before this baptism can be theirs, and the Kingdom of Heaven opened to them.

The conditions, so eagerly accepted by the depised publicans and sinners, proved too hard for their teachers. The Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not haptized of him. St. Luke vii. 29–30. Pride of birth, pride of education, pride of spiritual privileges, closed the gate of the kingdom.

Is there no lesson here for us? Never forget this, that the presence of unrepented sin in the heart turns all blessing into a curse. It not only shuts Heaven against us, but it shuts our hearts against Him who so lovingly stands at the door, knocking for us to open to Him. Rev. iii. 20.

52. The preaching of simple duties. St. Luke iii. 7-18.

HE beginning of the Gospel, the preaching of the kingdom, is not, we see, a speaking of smooth things only. Isa. xxx. 10.

Already there is mention of the wrath to come. Already the axe is shewn, laid at the root of the

tree. The fatal blow must be struck, the tree hewn down and cast into the fire, unless repentance follow upon sin, unless a holy life spring out of repentance. Scribes and Pharisees listen no longa. But the people would know more. The Holy Spirit has convinced them of sin, and they cry out, in that blessed cry which was heard from the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, What shall we do? The multitude first ask the question, those whose lives were not defiled with continual and notorious sin. To them the answer is given in the words of the royal law of love. Even as Isaiah ch. lviii. 1-12, had taught them that true repentance, true humbling of the soul before God, must find its expression in works of pity and of love, so does this greatest of prophets teach the same. Hast thou more than thou needest of food and raiment? Give to him that hath none. A simple duty, simply put; yet cutting like an axe through that covetousness which is a root of all evil.

Then came the publicans with the same question. To them the answer is, Exact no more than is appointed you. Now these publicans were the hirers of the public taxes. Each paid the government a fixed sum for the taxes of a particular district, and was then allowed to keep for himself all that he could collect. This is the custom in many Eastern countries at the present day. Of course a covetous and dishonest publican would pay as little as he could to the government, and would

wring as much as he could out of the people. Very few of the better class of the Jews stooped to this employment, not choosing in any way to acknowledge the Romans as their rulers. And thus the Publicans were, as a body, extortioners, unjust, and cruel, exacting more than was appointed them whenever they had the chance. They are now taught first to be honest. Afterwards they might be led to restore whatever they had taken wrongly; perhaps like Zaccheus, go on, in the end, to give the half of their goods to the poor. St. Luke xix. 8.

Then come the soldiers. They acted as police, bringing charges, and arresting the accused. Justice was roughly and carelessly administered in those times. Even now there is much oppression in Eastern countries. It would go hard with any poor man accused by the officers. He might be condemned to heavy fines. He might be stripped of his property by the soldiers under pretence of the law. Therefore the command is, here, No violence; no false accusations; no robbery; no discontent and rebellion against your employers.

So John preached to these, and to others who sought his ministry; first repentance, sorrow for the past and change of heart; then the fruits of repentance, simple duties of love and honesty, truth and quietness. Even as our Church catechism teaches us that the sum of our duties is love to God, and the doing our duty in the station of life to which He has been pleased to call us.

53. The Witness to Christ. St. Luke ii St. John i. 15-28.



REACHING like this found its we heart and conscience of the heart were drawn by it, convinced,

obedient. And this was the more remark cause the preacher worked no miracles in p he was sent from God. He did not even a old prophetic form, "Thus saith the Lot trusts to the simple power of his message, spoken, searching, painful, and yet pomultitudes are baptized by him in Jorc fessing their sins.

The wonder and excitement produced appearance increase rather than diminish. this? John, the son of Zacharias, he may is he not more? Is he not the Christ?

He knows what their questioning is, and to turn their attention from himself to Christ. He has preached the Kingdom of he says, and the Baptism of Repentance, prepare them for the Lord, whose serva There cometh one who shall baptize the Holy Ghost, and with fire, the Sea all hearts, the Great Reaper, Rev. xiv. shall separate the grain from the chawhile He stores the wheat in His garr burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. xiii. 30.

question presents itself some months later in a nd important form. Priest and Levites come rusalem to ask, "Who art thou?" Perhaps ause he is of the priestly line that they are to receive him as the Christ, though they esus, the son of Mary. His reply is still e. He is not the Christ. He is not Elijah, he comes in the spirit and power of Elijah, ot even that prophet which was for to come. wiii. 15; St. John vi. 14. He is but the the wilderness, preparing the way of the His baptism is with water, for the remission pon repentance. It brings no grace. No the Holy Spirit of God is attached to it.

f they are seeking the Christ they have to look. As the kingdom of Heaven is at the King Himself is among them.

tle while, and John the Baptist pointed to s the Lamb of God, that taketh away the he world. He himself knew, and was able t His disciples to the Saviour.

was the substance of John the Baptist's r. We are taught by the Lord Himself to John as the greatest among the prophets; who could not only speak of Christ as afar point to Him, and hear His voice, and to Him. His preaching is far more like the Lord than that of the ancient prophets. es through the outer man into the thoughts ents of the heart. It was not a full gospel,

certainly. But, once accept his ministry of repent ance, and you will feel a want which the forme teaching cannot satisfy: you must have a Saviou to deliver you from sin; a Holy Spirit to strengther you in the way of obedience.

54. The Baptism of Jesus. St. Luke iii. 23-25

HE blessed virgin mother, hearing the re port of John's preaching, and knowing what his ministry was, would feel the

shadow falling over her own quiet happiness. He son, so long her stay and comfort, must be abou His Father's business; and while she parted with Him, submitting her own will without reserve to the will of God, she would remember the prophecy of Simeon, and feel the sword already at her heart

The people are thronging to John for instruction and baptism. Jesus takes His place among them It seems that, at the first, John did not know the whole mystery of the Word made flesh in the persor of Jesus. But this he did know—that One infinitely higher and holier than himself stood before him, One whom he was not worthy to baptize, One from whom he would gladly receive the thorough washing, Ps. li. 2, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost But Jesus overcame the scruples of His servant thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness.

For now, having attained the full age for the Priesthood, he was come to shew Himself an High Priest among men. When Aaron and his sons were

hallowed to minister in the priest's office they were washed with water. Lev. viii. 6. So our great High Priest will wash Himself in John's Baptism, before beginning His better ministry.

The water, as it touches His sacred Flesh, finds there no defilement to be washed away. It is the water itself which receives cleansing. The virtue, which went out of Him to heal the sick, goes out the water to endue the simple element of water with a cleansing power. In our offices of Holy Baptism we plead with the Father as having by the Baptism of His well beloved Son in the river Jordan sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin.

John yields to his Master's will. Jesus is baptized by His servant, the Perfect by the imperfect, and being baptized, He prays. For prayer must ever go with the demand for Heavenly blessings; prayer must follow the gift that we may use the grace aright, and persevere.

Moreover, Aaron, at his consecration as priest was anointed with oil. Lev. viii. 12. This anointing was used for the priest, the prophet, and the king, a sign of divine grace and favour. Our great High Priest, who is also true Prophet and King of Kings, must likewise be anointed. He must have the unction from the Holy One. As He came forth from the water, the Heavens opened, the Holy Ghost descended on Him in a bodily form, like a dove; and the Father's voice declared Him the Beloved Son.

The Dove is an emblem of innocence. and faithful love; a beautiful type of pure, and peaceable Spirit now poured who is our peace. Now He is anointe Holy Ghost and with power, our Chris our Anointed One-Messiah-our Pror and King. The Father poureth the Sp Son, not as though the Son were up to without the Spirit; for Father, Son, and ever One. But by this sign and this v festing the glory and power of Jesus as Christ, the Son of the living God. St. M

Now, being full of the Holy Ghost, H to do, and to teach, armed for the war.

55. Fesus in the wilderness. St. Mai



ESUS, now declared to be the S with power by the Spirit of Hol i. 4, filled with the Spirit, go

His mighty warfare. Do not let us eve fied with any single aspect of His work. is the centre, the crowning act of R But the Son of God took our flesh that live as well as die—that He might c works of the devil. He must be in all points. He must meet ever conquer. And this He must do, not by of the Divine Word, or the purity of nature, but by the endurance of the hun not as the Son of God, but as the Seed of t

He who is to us perfect Teacher, Example, and Secrifice, is also to be perfect Strength. He takes our nature that He may work in us, as well as for the Adam's sin worked in us, worked ruin, corruption, and death. Christ is the second Adam. His inghteousness works in us, works righteousness, victory, and restoration. For we who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ; we have been grafted into His perfect human nature, and so His righteousness is put upon us. We, being in Christ, have conquered in Him. Christ being in us, daily conquers in us. This is the fruit of His strife and His victory in His regenerate people.

Hitherto His life had been one of quiet obedience. We wonder how much knowledge the devil possessed of the hidden mystery of Jesus' being. Some things he did not know. Still, he could hardly be ignorant of those earlier events which were revealed to so many. Certainly he had observed the sinless life of Mary's son, unsoiled by the temptations of thirty years. And now this baptism—the Spirit given from Heaven—the Voice "This is My beloved Son"—what can these things mean? He must be proved by temptation.

Jesus therefore goes forth that the enemy may make his assaults. The life of calm retired holiness is exchanged henceforth for active warfare. He is full of the Spirit, led by the Spirit. Men sometimes forget that seasons of greatest grace are seasons of greatest danger. God gives us grace not for

immediate peace, but for victory first, for peafterwards. So it was with Jesus. He goes fo to the strife alone, to be with the wild beasts, tak no food during forty days. No help is His fr man, no consolation.

Loneliness of *spirit* must have been his always. His heart foreknew from the first all bitterness of the cup which He had to drink. I even to His mother could He explain what it wo cost to do His Father's business. Now it was lo liness of body and spirit too; the pain of hunt the weariness of days and nights spent in watch and prayer. Now too He was to be brought n to sin, to endure the presence of the evil one, to vexed and offended by his foul temptations. A while the Divine nature sustained His hun nature as by miracle through this suffering, it not spare it one pang. Being true man, He suffe as we should suffer, only far more keenly. So sanctifies all loneliness, all weakness, and all pa

56. Fesus tempted. St. Matt. iv. 1-3.

ORTY days have passed; The Son of (
is still alone, save that the Father is w
Him. St. John xvi. 32. And now

devil will make his assault, and learn who this and in what sense He is the Son of God. He ta up the words so lately spoken from Heaven, andit seems—suggests a doubt. If Thou be the Son God, command that these stones be made breachest.

ee how this temptation resembles that which been so successful with our first parents. It s up the words of God; "Yea, hath God said. s is my beloved Son? Can it be a Father's love : leaves a son to perish with hunger? Or, if 1 be indeed the Son of God, prove Thy sonship. nmand that these stones be made bread. Then appeals to the cravings of the body, as if they it be satisfied by any means; "Food is within. reach. Why shouldest Thou hold thy hand?" t is temptation as at the beginning. It is temptaas at this day. The flesh is one of our three The sinful lusts of the flesh are at enemies. ays to be subdued. The natural wants of the y are to be supplied only in obedience to God's . We must trust Him who has given us life, to : us all things necessary for that life. ut, in the struggle for a livelihood, or to mainthe position in which men have been brought

the position in which men have been brought or to rise higher, they are often tempted to sin. setimes to be actually dishonest, to steal, to it, to tell lies, or at least to keep back part of truth, or to do some other thing which connce tells them is not exactly right. It is not fault of one class more than another. The ptation comes to the noble and the rich to ifice a little of the truth for the sake of their tion and their friends. They say more than rought to say; or they are silent when they ht to speak. Then with those engaged in trade;

2

as a nail sticketh fast between the joining stones, so doth sin between buying and Eccles. xxvii. 2. So with employers and s rather than lose a good situation the servan into a family where there are no opportun Communion, for Churchgoing even, perhaps or thought of God at all. They must get the lihood as they can, they say. What! So body and lose their souls! For that is comes to.

How does the Lord resist the devil? V sword of the Spirit which is the word of G appeals to the Scripture. We may toil ex late, we may possess every rich and every thing. But our life is in God's hands. His blessing we pine in the midst of plenty He gives the word we die. And if we hav to save our life by trusting in our own wi industry instead of His blessing, if we hav His commandments that we might get c world, we shall have laboured for the m perisheth, only to lose that which endur everlasting life. St. John vi. 27.

57. Fesus tempted to spiritual pride. St iv. 5-7.

LESSED is the man that endure tation; St. James i. 12; enduret temptation were a constant trial.

To conquer to-day is not to be at rest to-

The devil knows that many who have subdued the desh fall by spiritual pride. And seeing that Jesus cannot be led into distrust of God, or into problem for the bodily wants in a forbidden way, he tenews his assault in a different manner. He will empt Him to presume upon the promises of God.

Again it is—"If thou be the Son of God!" And his time, the tempter goes to the Scripture for his figuments. It is a terrible thought that the word of God, which has been the strength and salvation of so many, has been the weakness and death of thers. For it is not the letter of Scripture which twes, but the spirit. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Unlearned and istable souls have wrested the Scriptures to their of destruction. 2 St. Peter iii. 16. They put two meanings into the word of God, meanings hich the Church has never known. Then they ome, as the devil came to Jesus, teaching false octrine, leading their weaker brethren into grievius error and sin; and saying, "This is what the lible teaches."

God has promised to keep us in all our ways. This is the Christian's great comfort when he thinks of the dangers which surround him. But then he must not wilfully and presumptuously run into danger. This was what the devil wanted Jesus to do—to cast himself down from a great height, on the strength of the promise that God would keep Him. See how the promise really stands; "to

keep thee in all thy ways. Ps. xci. 11. Now, when we run wilfully into danger we are not in our ways that is, not in the ways which God has marked to us. The devil was cunning enough to leave those words; he knew that they would not help argument. Jesus defeats him a second time, an again with the same weapons: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Deut. vi. 16

Our first parents fell by this sin of spiritual pride. They rushed into danger, the forbidden knowledge of good and evil. Just so men fall every day. God has promised to keep them, they say. They need not fear. So they go into dangerous places; they mix with careless and ungodly companions; they read bad books; they think that they shall be able to keep themselves unharmed. They do not watch. They feel quite sure that they are safe enough. So they tempt God by presumption. The trial comes. They have cast themselves down from the place of safety. And now they have committed the very sin against which they felt so secure.

Why did not God keep them by His Angel? Because they were not in their ways. They chose to throw themselves into temptation. What wonder that they fell into sin! So the young man becomes a thief, the young woman an outcast Let this be a standing rule. Avoid all occasions of sin. Never go where you will be tempted to do wrong.

I. Jesus tempted to worldly glory. St. Matt. iv. 8-11.

THIRD temptation! Neither by fleshly indulgence, nor by spiritual presumption, can the Son of God be induced to do His will. Can He resist the offer of worldly glory? first Adam sinned, desiring to be as God. The bait may succeed here. All the kingdoms of world are displayed before His eyes. If Thou worship me, all shall be Thine.

nowing the Son of God as we do, we cannot ine that this was any temptation to *Him.* through the power of sin and the curse had evil one any power at all upon earth, and then through God's permission. Whereas all things the Father hath are the Son's. St. John xvi. 15. how should He, who speaks of one soul as of ite value beyond the whole world, give up the tion of all, for such an empty show?

there lay open a prospect of all that the tious, selfish heart could desire for indulgence esh and spirit. The good man would discern higher attractions. To have the world at his—to be able to use all its wealth and powers in ig the evils and comforting the sorrows of, ignorant, suffering humanity—to crush opsion and sin—to give freedom and peace and —what would not a good man give for this!

744

鼍

This temptation, probably, finds an echo in heart. Either for our own sake, or for the others, we wish we were richer, greater, more We are, so far, discontented. And disc in any degree, is wrong. It is desiring wha withholds. It is thinking ourselves wiser tha And what if we grasp at this by unlawful i We would not bow down and worship the directly. But when men give up their relig worldly advancement, when they will not de they know to be right, lest they should lo honour and respect of the world, or when the evil that good may come, they are seeking good things not from God, but from the They say in act, what they would shrink from ing in word, that they gain more by serving devil than by serving God.

If the other temptations were horrible to the of Jesus, how much more this! If Thou w down and worship me! It is the Holy One of who hears these words from the devil. If we ever shrunk from any foul temptation with hor shall know, yet only in the least degree, who was to Him. He has endured for us, and conque The Son of God speaks in His power. Not it ment now but command. Get thee hence, Se

The conflict is ended. Jesus is again alone Do not forget the secret of His victory temptation. By the word of Thy lips have me from the ways of the destroyer. Ps. xvii. 'ie Devil, and his works. Ephes. vi. 11-13;
Rev. xii. 7-12.

N our Baptism we renounced the devil and all his works. Let us be sure that we understand who and what the devil is. in holy writers suppose that some of the rebelled when the divine purpose concerning arnation of God the Son was made known ren, and the word went forth. "Let all the of God worship Him." In their pride pirits could not humble themselves to wore made flesh. Scripture does not tell us sitively. All we know for certain is that ebelled and were cast out of Heaven. God owed them a degree of freedom. In his f the man whom God had created in His rage, Satan tempted our first parents, and ell. That one sin gave the devil power the whole race of mankind. Ever since. been going to and fro in the earth; Job ii. 2: ig his opportunities, studying men's chatempting them to bring them into sin. He cing in the children of disobedience and them tempters in their turn. He goeth cunning and fierce; as a roaring lion seeking ne may devour, having great wrath. 3 not our only enemy, but one among many gels; he their prince, they his servants of it ranks, powers and characters. Just as the

PT:A

holy Angels ministered to the Lord Jest minister to the heirs of salvation, so the angels, at the bidding and after the e of their master who tempted the Lord, us.

We must understand, therefore, that the a real person, a spiritual being, whom we he much reason to dread, against whom we mus For by frightening us or deceiving us, he wi can, drag us, soul and body into hell. Does give a new force to the command to walk spectly, to work out our salvation with fetrembling? Phil. ii. 12.

Yet there is this to comfort us. Greater that is with us than he that is against u devil can do nothing without God's peri He cannot pluck us out of our Father's har John x. 28-29. He cannot make us do a against our will. He may tempt, may affli torment, but he is weaker than the weakest who hold them fast by God. If he cannot into sin, he would afflict us all the more; ar may permit this that our weakness may she His glory. Job ii. 3. By faith in Christ v defeat all his cunning, all his violence. begin to yield, every fault plays into his Therefore it is written, Neither give place devil; and, Lest Satan should get an advar us; for we are not ignorant of his devices iv. 27; 2 Cor. ii. 11.

ministry of the Holy Angels. St. Matt.

IE deeper we see into the wondrous things of man's life the more terrible it appears. There is the glad thought that God has is in love, and for His glory. Then on the nd we find ourselves attacked by the devil, principalities and powers, and the wicked high places. They envy us the love of ier. They would tear us away by violence. How can we hope to prevail against

ney are not able to do all they wish. They en conquered once and turned out of And those glorious beings who conquered l and his angels are still fighting against nd on our side. The holy Angels, the of the Lord God of Sabaoth, watch the f this world with tender interest. They ouble duty. They are adoring spirits be-Throne of God. They are also ministerits to the heirs of salvation. Heb. i. 12. e called in Scripture the Holy Angels, for ght of sin has ever crossed their minds. auty and greatness, their glory and strength, and our imagination. Their knowledge, and and love are above anything which we on ssess.

ney do not despise us on account of our

sinfulness. They love God, and therefo all whom God loves. They love us. among them when any one poor sing Their great delight has been to carry th of divine love from Heaven to earth. the blessings of His infinite goodness the children of God out of trouble. at them in all their ways. Ps. xxxiv. 7: xc watch our warfare from their shining s They fly down to us with their mini help and refreshment. They had bee their Lord in His fast, His temptatic victory. Now, as again after His ag garden, they came and ministered unto they will to us, watching us, helping us of danger, ministering divine refreshme who are faint, yet pursuing, in the hour We cannot see them. We are not consc presence. No. But we know that the What if God opened our eyes as the eyes of Elisha's servant? 2 Kings should then see the hosts of the Lord around us, and boldly go forth to knows how often we have been as defended by these unseen friends? over us while we are asleep. in sickness and sorrow. They correct sins. They rejoice over our repentar lead us, and guard us, and encourage us. we die they carry the spirits of the '

they carried the spirit of Lazarus, into Abra-

Especially when we have fought and conquered they rejoice, and hasten with their comfort to ist's exhausted yet victorious soldier. As they istered to the Master so they will minister to servant. God give us the help and comfort of ministrations! God give us grace to imitate 1 in the strife and obedience, that we, like them, overcome the wicked one!

The witness of John the Baptist. St. John i. 19-34.

HE first great conflict is over. The Son of God has suffered, has been tempted by the devil, has conquered, has been refreshed he ministry of the holy Angels. He is once among men, preparing for His work. For He go about among them doing good, and laying foundations of His holy Church.

was about this time that the Priests and Levites e to John asking whether he were the Christ or The holy preacher bids them look not to him, to the greater than he, who was shortly to be ifested. The next day He bears witness pub; Behold the LAMB OF GOD which taketh, the sin of the world. I saw and bare record this is the SON OF GOD.

ow observe the titles which John the Baptist to Jesus. The Jews were seeking for the

Christ, Messiah, King of the Jews, we restore the kingdom to Israel. Their the yet of earth. He has been preaching of and remission of sins, and He looks to J Lamb of God, provided by God, Gen. Lamb of whom Isaiah spake, the traccepted by God, who should Himsel sins in His own Body on the Tree, by where we should be healed. Isa. liii. 5-7; I St.

The Lamb of God, because He is God. It is because He is more than m as true man, that His sacrifice is a s that He can make atonement, and be ation for our sins. The holy Baptist 1 in the loneliness of the desert. He ha voice from Heaven. And He now 1 same great confession which won for Lord's special blessing and favour; Christ, the Son of the living God.

The preaching of John was thus a Gos repentance towards God, faith towards Jesus Christ.

Few there were to receive this sayin yet Jesus had not manifested His glory deed. As yet John is the greater of the eyes of men. But some of his discipl words, and follow Jesus. Not ungrassaking their former teacher, but thankful his teaching into practice. What mor wish than to lead them to their Lord as

what higher reward can any minister of the 1 desire, than to see the souls committed to his ge seeking the True Shepherd, that He may 3 them and feed them, and give them the life :h He has won for them by His death, because is the Son of God.

Andrew and John follow Jesus. St. John i. 38-42.

HIS mention of John's disciples throws a further light upon his ministry. Men often speak of John the Baptist as if he were e more than a preacher of repentance, casting d seed far and wide, rousing his hearers to a se of their sin, and their need of a Saviour; 1 bringing them to Baptism, as an act full of ining. For all would understand that the outd washing was a sign of that inward washing nout which the soul cannot be clean. But it is r that Iohn's ministry was more of a system 1 this. He gathered disciples round him, even of old young men had been gathered into the pols of the prophets. 2 Kings xx. 35. He now its them to the Lamb of God that they may go to a fuller teaching.

truck by their master's words, these two men ow Jesus. One is Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. to ther we know, from his very humility in not ag his name, to have been the beloved disciple, a. No writings of St. Andrew's are left us; no reference to his preaching. But in the St. John we trace continually those w first master. For he, above all the Apc us clearly the Son of God in His Div He begins his Gospel by declaring the God from all eternity. He closes by tel these things were written that men mi that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of Goc xx. 31. He, above all the Apostles, the Church the power and glory of the I and redeeming His people by His Blood

They follow Jesus, wishing to see H is, and to hear from his own lips what can declare. They spend hours, perhap in His humble lodging. They had belifirst, on their master's account. Now them as with the men of Samaria. heard Him themselves, and know that the Christ, the Saviour of the world. St.

With these words on his lips Andr sought his own brother Simon, and brot Iesus.

Perfect examples these for all Christ There is John the Baptist content to be those whom He loves are following Chr are his two disciples leaving their tear they have loved for the sake of Him wh Love. They have seen Jesus, and bel must speak; lighting the flame of low hearts, even as the fire spreads through

ach. So must we be content to give up all to t, to leave all for Christ. And when we have I Him, and have learned how precious He is, nust seek other souls to bring them to Him. If we have not this missionary spirit, this love uls, we have not really the Spirit of Christ; re of His love has never touched our heart.

Peter is brought to Jesus. St. John i. 42.

T. PETER too was probably a disciple of John the Baptist. Else what should he, a fisherman of Galilee, be doing so many from his home? Now his brother's affection rought him to Jesus. He stands for the first in that blessed Presence.

sus beheld him as he was coming, looked upon into him, as they stood face to face. The seing Lord looked into his heart, and saw his less, even though he should for a little while loved; saw too what great things he should r for His Name's sake. The Face of the Lord; life to them that seek Him. Ps. lxxx. 3. first look drew Simon Peter to Jesus, and him, even as another look three years later filled oul with penitence, and drew him back to the St. Luke xxii. 61.

sus called him by his name; Thou art Simon, of Jonas. Perhaps this was spoken in proof lis knowledge, before Andrew had mentioned prother's name. Without doubt it was a mark

of interest and love. But the Lord has a name for him. Even as it is written in Isaiah: 4, I have called thee by thy name; I have named thee, though thou hast not known me. I will write upon him My new Name. Rev. iii. This is as if He had said; Thou art Simon, is, obedient. Thou shalt be also called Cep a stone, firm as a rock in thy obedience to faith, built henceforth into the Rock that be thee. Deut. xxxii. 18.

The day following Jesus would return Galilee. Three disciples have already sought I He would yet gather others round Him. findeth Philip, and calleth him to follow. As Pl was of the same city with Andrew and Peter may look upon him as their companion f Galilee, an attentive listener to John's preachir fellow disciple with them. No doubt he, like had heard John's witness to Jesus. Now he is ca and obeys. Then, like Andrew, he seeks his fr Nathanael.

Had he already known Jesus, that he speak him as "the Son of Joseph," and "the Nazarer It would seem so. And by saying "We have fou he gives us reason to believe that he had spo with the others, and that their faith had I confirmed by the sweet counsel they had ta together.

Observe how much of life and force is give this narrative by the writer telling the even th day, in its order. We begin with the visit of quiry paid by the Jewish rulers to John the Baptist, ien there is "the next day," v, 29, with its great stimony to the Lamb of God; a third day, v, 35, th the two disciples following Jesus; and the day llowing, when Jesus would go forth into Galilee, id findeth Philip. It is the story of an eye-witness, no rehearses the things which he has seen and ard, I St. John i. 3. It is the simple word of truth.

64. Nathanael. St. John i. 45-51.

E have found the Messias; him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. What wonderful tidings to be so

ddenly brought! It is like the Angel's message the shepherds. But this time the bearer is not heavenly messenger but a dear earthly friend. athanael might well doubt whether Philip's good ws was true. Especially when Philip added that is new found Messiah belonged to the despised ty of Nazareth. The life of Jesus must have en indeed modest and hidden when such a man Nathanael, a native of Cana in the same country, ho knew the Scriptures and looked for the Messiah, id never heard of Him. But if Nathanael was inined to doubt, his friend's earnestness persuades m. He goes to see. And his humble seeking is warded. He is welcomed with words of approval. or he is one of the pure in heart, of those who all see God. Too humble to take the words of praise to himself, his first feeling is we Jesus should know him. And that we treased by the Lord's reply; When I under the fig tree I saw thee.

We gather from this, and from the an but a little while since Nathanael had be the fig tree alone, his heart filled with thoughts of his own spiritual life, and of the ways of God. He too, we may suppose of John's disciples, deeply struck with the and acts of his master—repentance and and the nearness of Messiah, the Lamb of Son of God. An all-seeing eye alone of those thoughts. Yet Jesus speaks with and sympathy which convey a meaning define the mere words, "I saw thee. Thy see heart are known to me."

Philip was right. John was right. The deed found the Christ. Rabbi, Thou art God. Thou art the King of Israel. W what mighty faith! They who believe pronounced worthy of higher knowleds shall see greater things—the heavens of Angels of God ascending and descending Son of Man. The vision which their Jacob saw shall be granted to them. Inderstand that heaven and earth a in the person of Him who is the Son of yet Son of Man; that in Him the Ki Heaven is set up on earth.

では

short days have passed, five names have one us, names of no worldly greatness. Yet he beginning of the Church. John had them. Jesus has drawn them. Not by acle, or by the strife and cry of public: But in His own sweet ways of drawing; heir master's word, one by his brother, by his friend, one by His own direct call, the secret ways of grace. The kingdom cometh not with observation. Men martheir hearts and looked, and saw not, st was among them, sought and found, on and loved, followed by disciples who onfessed Him to be the Son of God and srael.

as the seed of the future Gospel harvest. the thin thread of the River of the Water hich was to fill the earth with the know-he glory of God.

e Marriage at Cana. St. John ii. 1-12.

5US now departs to Galilee, St. John i. 3; these five with Him as disciples, that i, learners. They go to Cana, Nathanael's on the third day Jesus, with his disciples, at a marriage. The simple statement Mother of Jesus was there" gives support tient opinion that she was related either degroom or the bride. "The Mother of St. John's title for her. And what more

blessed, what more honourable title couniting the blessedness and power of with the favour and glory bestowed up the Most Highest?

The wine fails, for they were not richest in the land, and she turns to her s Did she know His power, then?

We cannot tell. As yet He had never forth His glory. Still it is possible that I her something of the great work which Him; and she who had pondered all t in her heart may have felt that His t absence in Judæa, and His return with ples, marked the beginning of His new they may have told her all that they he heard. She speaks her wishes to H expecting, believing, without exactly whether the want can be, or may be, su

He gently chides her, as if she we an obedience which it was no longer Hi His earthly mother; His Divine power in the fulness of its time. But with affection and respect. The words "W have I to do with thee?" sound harsh guage. As He spoke them, they wer peasant might speak to a Queen. Sown meaning upon them, and turns to th "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

. O most wise and perfect teaching, never yet been excelled, which could from the lips of saints or angels! O most t law for man's life, whatever fails us! To atsoever Jesus bids us is life. We know this. do we perform it? Too often, like the rich ruler, we choose what we will do and what ll leave undone. Else why should men desomany of His commands, especially that last command of His, "Do this in remembrance ?" St. Luke xxii. 19.

vas not so with the servants. They could not stand the meaning of His command. They ever seen proof of His power. It was against experience, against their reason and common

Yet they obeyed without hesitation. And was their reward.

s commands to us may be sometimes hard to stand, hard to perform. But we have known romises, His power, and His goodness. We by experience that they who do His will have an eternal reward. Yet we disobey Him le things and in great. What wonder that our ail us, when we despise the corn and the new with which He would make us cheerful! ix. 17.

6. Christian rejoicing. St. John ii. 1-11.

HE joy of the marriage feast is likely to be interrupted by the want of wine. And He who was to bear all our sorrows, condeto minister to simple human joys. The

seven water vessels are filled to the brim. The servants draw out, and find no longer water but wine, good wine, in quantity some hundred and fifty gallons. Such is the first miracle of Jesus; more, far more than enough, and of the best; so that the ruler of the feast called the bridegroom, and expressed his satisfaction publicly. Thou hast kept the good wine until now.

The ruler of the feast was not the master of the house, but a guest, appointed to occupy the chief seat, and to give the necessary orders.

Does this not help us to understand the right spirit of Christian rejoicing? It is true this world is very full of trouble and pain, that we have an awful task before us in our spiritual warfare, that the remembrance of our sins is grievous to us, and the burden of them intolerable. When we think what sin is, and what it has done, ought we ever to rejoice at all?

We must give the practical answer—that, in spite of these too real grounds for sorrow, Christians may yet lawfully rejoice. The first notes of the Gospel Story were good tidings of great joy. We are expressly bidden to rejoice in the Lord alway.

Yet some may say, "That refers only to religious, distinctly religious joy." But surely there is no ground for laying down this limit. The Lord Jesus Christ, who saw all that we see of the power and horror of sin, who had but just now returned from His forty days fast, and His terrible tempta-

on, could join in a wedding feast extending over veral days. He not only blessed it with His prence, but by His Divine power ministered to the ants of the guests. Even so far as to supply wine more abundance than was required.

Does He not teach us by this that pure humany, in the gathering together of friends, in the nctification of earthly relationships, is dear to lim? He will shed His blessing over the commest things of daily life, turning our water into ine, filling earthly things with heavenly grace and ory. We need not fear to use His good gifts with joicing, the corn and wine and oil of gladness; r all are sanctified by the word of God and ayer. I Tim. iv. 4-5.

Only let us take heed that our rejoicing be a joicing in the Lord. That will give us the good ine, abundantly, at the end. For there is a rejoicing which is after the flesh. Isa. v. 11-12; Rom. iii. 13. Never should Christian men meet toether for anything in which they would fear to id Jesus and His disciples to their company, on hich they could not fearlessly ask His blessing. Ind when they think of the dishonour done to His loly Name by sinful revellings, especially at the oly seasons of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, an they not make their prayer of penitence and itercession in behalf of those who in their fleshly njoyment sin against His goodness and their own puls? Job i. 4-5.

67. Christ's glory manifested in miracles. St. John ii. 11.



HIS turning of the water into wine was the first of many miracles, by which Jesus manifested forth His glory.

By a miracle we understand something dome beyond and above the common course of nature.

Every new revelation from God was in this way proved to men. Moses came, bringing the Law. And not only did Moses work many miracles, but the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai was attended by fearful sights, and great signs from Heaven. The prophets many of them worked miracles. And now that the Law was to be fulfilled and to make way for the Gospel, Jesus must prove Himself a Teacher sent from God by some such mighty work, beyond the ordinary powers of men.

It is a mistake to suppose that Jesus of Nazareth required His hearers to believe His message and to receive Him as the Christ on His own unsupported word. He appealed to a two fold witness, (1) the prophecies of the Scripture, and (2) His own mighty works. St. John vi. 36.; x. 25. He came among the Jews doing mighty works which none other man could do, healing diseases, casting out devils, even raising the dead. He gave this same power afterwards to His disciples that they should do even greater works. All who saw Him were obliged to confess that He came with more than human power.

me ventured to accuse Him of doing these racles by the power of the devil; but there was denial that the miracles were worked. Jesus inted to the miracles in proof that He came from od, and that His message was a message from God. hen He called upon the Jews to receive Him, to lieve Him, to believe in Him. And many did lieve on Him, and on these grounds. They were nvinced by the miracles.

What are the grounds of our faith in Jesus as the hrist, the Son of God? We have seen no miraes. We believe the Creeds which the Church has ught us, the doctrines which the Church proves us from the Scriptures. But why do we believe e Scriptures, and the Creeds, and the Church? ave we a new ground of faith?

No. It is the same ground. We have hold, we ay say, of the same chain, but by a lower link. It can trace the Church and her doctrines to the postles, we can trace the Scriptures to the inspired riters, by what is called historical evidence. We elieve because those Scriptures were written, those extrines taught, that Church formed, by holy men ho themselves worked miracles in proof that God as with them; the Apostles and disciples of Jesus, ho had Himself appealed to His miracles in proof at He was the Son of God.

We wonder at the hardness of heart of those we who saw those many wonderful works, and yet jected the Worker. Let us take heed to ourselves.

If we believe not the Church and the Scripture no miracle, no messenger, would convince us; no no even if one rose from the dead. St. Luke xvi. 31,

68. The teaching of Miracles. St. John ii. 1-11.

HE miracles of Jesus were mighty acts rousing the attention and wonder of al who saw them. But they were also s

many lessons to those who had eyes to read aright. The Lord Jesus taught by His works as well as by His works. When we read His miracles we shouk try to understand their lessons; just as, when we look at the works of God's Hand in nature, we read in them His goodness and wisdom, His eterns power and Godhead Acts xiv. 17; Rom. i. 20.

In this miracle of the turning the water into wine the Lord teaches us that He looks with the eyo of approval and blessing on innocent and Christian rejoicing; that He gives us all good things richly to enjoy. I Tim. vi. 17.

He teaches us to sanctify our enjoyment by inviting His presence and blessing upon it. For tha merriment which dares not think and speak of Jesus cannot be becoming those who bear the name of Christian.

He teaches us that Christian joy alone deserve that name; for the world's pleasures perish by the using, Col. ii. 22; while Christian joy reserves the best to the last.

. It is at a marriage that He works His fire

niracle, thus by His presence in power and blessing dorning and beautifying that union instituted by rod in the time of man's innocency, but lowered, and often defiled, by fleshly imaginations. He would make marriage to be a holier thing than the world yet deemed it; more than a decent and recoming arrangement and security for family life. He would make it a great Mystery, signifying the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church. Eph. v. 25-32. For He, the Word of God, hath harried our flesh, and as the Son of God and Son of Man hath joined both in one.

Not without purpose is this turning the water into wine His first miracle. The first miracle of Moses was the turning of water into blood. Exod. ii. 20. For the Law was a ministration of death. Christ turns the water into wine; for the Gospel maketh glad the heart of man by bringing life.

Again, Christ comes, not creating new things, but changing that which is imperfect into perfect; water into wine; the beggarly elements of the Jews' religion, Gal. iv. 9, into the life-giving Sacraments of the Christian Church. All that He touches He can change from earthly into heavenly. He changes our poor fallen nature and character into the new man; making our spirits one with Himself, our bodies very members of His Body, His flesh and His bones. The water of Baptism is by Him sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin. The Bread and Wine in the Holy Communion.

are by Him made to be His Flesh and His Blood. The ministers of His Gospel, though but men, receive heavenly power, even to the bringing God's forgiveness to the troubled conscience. St. John xx. 20. Sinners become saints; darkness is made light; death is quickened into life. Yea, the low-liest things of earth are changed, so that the least of common duties, done in the name of Christ and to the glory of God, shall not fail of its reward.

From Cana the Lord proceeds to Capernaum, and thence to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. And now His public ministry begins.

PART V.

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

69. The cleansing of the Temple. St. John ii. 13-25.

HE Lord Jesus had gone up to the Passover, year after year, as any devout Jew, obeying the law. Now He will begin His ninistry by an public act of authority, which shall

fraw all eyes to Him.

He goes at once to the Temple. Thereby He ets us an example that, wherever we go, our first risit should be to the House of God to pray. What a blessing that our Churches are not now so ealously barred as they used to be, day after day, and that in many places the House of Prayer is open all day for the private devotion of the poorest!

What does He see there? The court of the Gentile converts was turned into an exchange and a cattle market. The foreign Jews were obliged to change their own coin before they could make the offering of the half shekel—the usual piece of silver. And of course they had to purchase the theep or ox for their sacrifice. So this was done or their convenience.

Jesus enters, a stranger from Galilee, humbly clad, with nothing about Him to strike the eye, or to enforce obedience. He looks on this noisy scene with shame and indignation. But how can He teach reverence for the Holy Place? How can he overcome ancient custom, strongly rooted, and defended by the excuse that all this buying and selling was for the better service of God?

His course is very simply told. He made a scourge of small cords—nothing sufficient to hut or to terrify, and with this He drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, together with their cattle, and overthrew the tables, scattering the money under the feet of the flying crowd.

It is one man against thousands, one man, unarmed and without authority, interfering with long established customs in which the whole nation is interested. How easy to have resisted Him! Yet all yield before Him! It was a miracle. Something in His eye, or voice, or action turned their hearts as the rivers of waters; even as when in the Garden of Gethsemane at His words, "I am He," the soldiers went backward and fell to the ground. St. John xviii. 6.

A miracle mighty in its power, distinct in its lessons! It taught reverence for holy places. It taught also that Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be One greater than the Temple, St. Matt. xii. 6; claimed to be the Son of God. A few months before, the rulers of the Jews were asking Johntha

Baptist if he were the Christ. Now Jesus answers their question.

they appear to understand His claim. For they ask Him by what authority He does these things. He replies by a dark saying, speaking of the Temple of His Body, which, though they abould destroy it, He would restore again in three days. They cannot understand, though they treature the saying to His hurt. St. Mark xiv. 58.

The lesson He has taught them brings no profit to them. Many indeed from the multitude believe on Him, seeing His miracles. But He knew how finil is the affection of men. He made no more disciples for the present. But He has shewn himself in His power.

70. Reverence for Holy Places. St. Folin ii. 13-17.

EVERENCE my sanctuary; I am the Lord. Levit. xix. 30. That was the command given by the Most High to His people under the old covenant, a command which is answered by the natural instinct of every Godfaring heart. We find that in the very earliest times God sanctified certain fixed places with His especial Presence. He shewed His Presence more distinctly in the Glory which shone upon the Mercyseat of the Tabernacle and the Temple. Though Heaven is His dwelling place, yet the Almighty dwelt in the Temple. Exod. xxv. 8; St. Matt. xxiii.

31. That was His House. Quietness and rever-

ence were required from all who appro Eccles. v. i, as well as from those who we therein. Our Lord's own love for His House is shewn by His being continua Temple, by His words concerning it, ar miracle repeated later, St. Matt. xxi. 12, the buyers and sellers from its sacred cout Testament and New agree in this. The dishonour the House of God dishonour God dishono

Our Churches are as much the Houses the Jewish Temple was. A Christian built to the honour and glory of the Trinity in Unity; sanctified by the bl Bishop, by the celebration of t Sacraments, by the voice of prayer an · by the reading and preaching of the word There the Lord Jesus Christ is present v two or three gathered together in His Nan He reveals Himself to His faithful on Sacrament of the Holy Communion, feed with His very Flesh and Blood. There th on earth joins with angels and archangel the company of Heaven in praising and m the glorious Name of God. We may sa Churches, as Jacob said of Bethel, Si Lord is in this place. This is none other This is the gate of House of God. Gen. xxviii. 16-17.

Every Christian man must love and his parish Church. He would be shocked

used as the Jews used the courts of the Temple, imed into a market or a fair. But do we not ometimes, by our idle, and worldly, and fleshly houghts, treat our Churches as badly? We go o Church. The solemn service is being offered But we are thinking of something ery different, our losses and gains, our pleasures nd cares, our engagements and our merrymakings, rur dress and our good looks; or perhaps proudly poasting over some poor soul whose faults strike is at that moment, or composing ourselves for a momfortable sleep. Is not this doing just what hese profane covetous Jews did; bringing our buying and selling into the House of God, despising he Church of God, defiling it with thoughts of in? I Cor. iii. 17.

Let us pray, on entering Church, that God will keep us from all ungodly thoughts. And when kervice is over, let us pray again that He will hear is, not according to our imperfect petitions, but according to the merits of His Son Jesus Christ.

71. Nicodemus. St. John iii. 1-21.

T this first Passover Jesus worked more miracles than that of cleansing the Temple. Many believed on Him. Yet, knowing heir hearts, He did not trust them, or invite them become His disciples. There was one man, owever, a Pharisee and a ruler among the Jews,

who could not be contented with beholding afar of He must speak face to face, and hear for himself.

Now the Pharisees, it must be remembered, wer the proudest of the whole nation. Their very nam signified "separated;" for they looked upon them selves as the wisest and holiest of the chose people. They made a great point of knowing and keeping the law down to its very least particular Nicodemus was one of these, and a member of th chief council. He too, we suppose, had heard th witness of John, and now, struck by the miracle he came to Jesus, by night. Do not think of him from this as a man wanting in courage. True, h might have been bolder. But it were best to cor sider his character in its noblest light. A ma high in authority, probably advanced in years, teacher himself, he is open to conviction. comes when all others of his age and station hole back in disdain. He calls one much younger tha himself, Rabbi, that is, Master or Teacher. H believes already, and he wishes to learn. For h confesses that Jesus must be a Teacher come from God. A very different character this from thos who shut their eyes and ears to the miracles an teaching of Jesus, or accused Him of casting ou devils by the prince of the devils!

This teachable spirit is very rare. It should the especial beauty of children, but we do ne always find it in them, still less among the elder One of God's special gifts is the readiness to ke

side prejudices and to receive the truth; and this ras his. We must wonder at Nicodemus and dmire him. Let us also imitate him.

Of course he is not yet perfect. He has begun with his tribute of respect, and his confession of faith. Now he waits for Jesus to speak, rather as if he expected to hear the fulness of the Gospel revealed to him. If so, he is disappointed. There is but one door into the Kingdom of Heaven for the greatest as for the least. The ruler of the Jews must enter, as the little child born yesterday must enter, by the new birth.

The enquirer is astonished, and Jesus replies more distinctly. Entrance into the Kingdom of God is only by the new birth of water and the Spirit. The Christian Baptism, which He will empower His disciples to administer, shall be the means of admission into the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven. And it shall be not a mere form, but a pledge of inward and spiritual grace. a real work of the Spirit of God. These things are not to be judged of as fleshly and earthly matters, by sight and hearing. The workings of the Spirit are no more to be traced and measured than the course and progress of the wind.

. How can these things be?

That is the great cry of unbelief. Man's heart is proud that he says, "I will not believe anything which I cannot understand." And this pride remains n many who accept a great portion of Christian

teaching. "How can this man give us His Flesh to eat?" So said some of old. So say some at this day. "How can a child be new born in Baptism? How can—?" But it is not good to repeat these questions. We will not wait to understand. Lord, Thou hast said it. I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief.

72. Jesus our Teacher. St. John iii. 2, 11-13.



HE work of the Saviour covers every need of the human soul. Our condition by nature is one of darkness. Unless God

should teach us we know nothing; not even that we are in want. Therefore God taught the world, first by His prophets, now at last by His Son, Heb. i. I. The Lord Jesus came to be the Light of the world; to teach as well as to do, declaring His Father unto men, and setting them the example of a perfect life.

Here was the Brightness of the Father's Glory, the express Image of His Person, standing among men. Heb. i. 2; St. John i. 18. When He spoke of Heavenly things, He spoke of that which He knew as no man can know. They who had seen Him had seen the Father. St. John xiv. 9.

Great indeed was the Father's mercy in teaching men His will by the prophets. But how much greater in teaching us by His Son! Look at the Lord Jesus in this work. Not in His knowledge only is He wonderful, but in His compassion upon ae ignorant, His patience and meekness with the ainsayers, His clear insight into the different ainds which sought instruction. Wonderful, too, n His earnestness and perseverance, so that often He had little time left for prayer, no leisure at all to eat. St. Mark vi. 31. Yet with all His gentleness He knew how to face His opponents, and to tilence them with the stern reply of His heart-mearching wisdom.

In His conversation with Nicodemus we observe that He touches upon the deepest mysteries of His Gospel. Here, at the very beginning of His ministry, He speaks of the Spirit's work in Baptism, and of Himself as the faithful and true Witness, Rev. iii. 14, the Son of Man which is in Heaven. He speaks of His atonement, and of the saving power of faith in His Death. He declares the sin of unbelief, and the temper which leads some to faith, others to unbelief. The love of the truth, of light, and of goodness, alone can know Him and receive Him.

This was the teaching of Jesus; the same when he sat alone with the Jewish ruler as when He sent forth His disciples to teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Blessed Three in One. The beginning agrees with the end. More is required of His people than obedience to the letter of the old Law. More even than purity of heart. We must believe in Him, and in His word. We must look to His Death. We must be made par-

takers with Him first of all, putting on Christ in Baptism, Gal.iii.27, being new-born to God by water and the Spirit, if we would enter His Kingdom.

Let us ever remember this, that the Christian's teacher is no other than God the Son Himself. The Heathen saw but faint gleams of light. The Jew saw more clearly indeed, but through a veil. We see the True Light. And He, departing, has sent His Spirit, and yet abides Himself with His Church What then shall be our lot if we will not hear! Heb ii. 1-4.

73. The Sacrament of the New Birth. St. John iii. 5.



HE first reference of John the Baptist to Christ speaks of His better Baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The first

public act of Jesus is to seek the baptism of water at His servant's hands. His first recorded word as a teacher declares the necessity and value of the Baptism with which He shall baptize. Verily, verily—mark those solemn words of double assurance—I say unto thee, except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Volumes of religious teaching are contained in this verse. For Baptism is one of the foundations of the doctrine of Christ. Heb. vi. I.

Consider now what we are by nature, born in sin, the children of wrath. The taint and corruption of Adam is upon us all. In Adam all an

lead. The Son of God, the Second Adam, came a quickening, or life-giving, Spirit. He took our nature in order to restore it to its former glory. In His Person it was so restored. And His will was that His people should be joined to Him, made members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones. Eph. v. 30. He would graft them into Himself, that they might draw their life from Him, as a branch draws life from its root. So His life thould flow into them; so they should be partakers of the Divine nature. He would be our life.

How should this be? By the Sacrament of Baptism. For by it we are planted together into Christ. Rom. vi. 3–11. As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Gal. iii. 27. We are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What is this but a new life; a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness? And this through Baptism. Through the outward washing of water the Spirit of God works the inward cleansing. We are made one with Christ. We are made children of God and brought into His kingdom, Our bodies are made Temples of the Holy Ghost. This is the glory of the Gospel, that the Son of God has come to be, as it were, a new stock to the fallen race of men, to plant them into His Body, to fill them with all His fulness. They are accepted, not merely for the sake of the Beloved, but in the

Beloved. Eph. i. 6. They are in Christ, and if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17.

On this blessed truth are founded all St. Paul's exhortations to holy living. When the baptized Christian sins, he sins against Christ, he defiles the Temple of the Holy Spirit. I Cor. vi. 15, 17, 19. This warning could have no meaning if we had never been born again, never been made members of Christ's Body. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. As baptized Christians we have received grace. We are possessed of far higher spiritual favours than the greatest of the saints under the old covenant. St. Matt. xi. II. We are answerable accordingly. To whom much has been given from him shall much be required.

74. The teaching of Heavenly things. St. John iii. 10-21.



VERY thoughtful reader will observe that St. John's Gospel differs from the other three. They shew us Christ in His actions.

St. John shews us Christ in His thoughts and words. He brings us to hear from the lips of the Divine Teacher Himself. Even the miracles which He mentions are so many texts and proofs of the teaching which accompanies them. And miracles and teaching alike bear upon these two chief truths, that the Word, who is God, was made Flesh and dwelt among us, and that believing we have life

His Name. Nowhere does the Divineer shine forth more clearly than in this chapicodemus is perplexed at the doctrine of the rth in Baptism. The Lord gently chides his as of understanding. "Art thou the teacher ael, and hast not learned this? Dost not thou aber the promise that God will sprinkle clean upon His people, and give them a new and a new spirit? Ezek. xxxvi. 25-26. hast called me a Teacher come from God. indeed from God, and yet I am with God; down out of Heaven, yet not less in Heaven; rth as Son of Man; with God as the Eternal; v. 13.

en He declares the channel of all grace from to man. All flows through Himself who is the ator, the Reconciliation, the Atonement. Messhall be King and Priest of all nations; His ne and His Altar, the Cross. As the Serpent ifted up in the wilderness, Numb. xxi. 9, for lealing of whosoever turned to look, so must son of man be lifted up, that whosoever beh in Him may be saved.

re is the doctrine of the Atonement; here is xplanation of type and prophecy, thus early known to Nicodemus. He is taught to look or a triumphant but a suffering Messiah; not e glory of the few but to the salvation of the l. This was the kingdom to which Baptism lopen the door.

The Israelite in the wilderness was bitten by the fiery flying Serpent. The deadly poison ran through his whole nature. He was dying. How shall be be saved? By turning himself to look with faith at the remedy provided by God.

So is the sinner bitten by that old Serpent, the devil. Rev. xii. 9. He is dying; he is dead. How can he be saved?

Only by turning himself to look at the Remedy provided by God, the Son of God lifted up upon the Cross that He may draw all men unto Him. The sinner must believe in Jesus. But he must turn and look. He must apply the Blood of Christ to his soul by Baptism. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

Any dying Israelite who refused to turn and look to the Serpent of Brass was already as good as dead. He had denied God's love, and truth, and power. He had put away life. So the sinner who refuses to turn and look to Christ, is condemned already. Faith in Christ is life; for faith is love and obedience. Unbelief is death; for unbelief is a trust in self instead of Him who alone can tell us how to be saved, who Himself is the only Saviour.

75. Fesus in the land of Judæa. St. Fohn iii. 22-36



HE Lord Jesus now goes from Jerusalem into the land of Judæa, where He spent some months, working miracles and preach-

ing the Kingdom of God. The other Evangelists

pass this ministry over in silence. But we may budge of its power by the many disciples who sought His Baptism. St. John iv. i.

Why should St. John mention this? Because he would teach us yet more of the power of this holy Sacrament. In each of the first seven chapters of his Gospel He represents water as a means of grace and blessing and power.

lesus was baptizing; not Himself but by His sciples. He would not have the people look to Him as if Baptism must of necessity be administered y His hand. He would teach them that He employs His Church in the stewardship and disvibution of the means of grace; and that every one who is baptized by His ministers is baptized by Himself. The grace of His Sacrament comes not from a fleshly presence and touch, but by the Divine Presence of the Son of Man which is in Heaven. His ascension to His Father's Right Hand is not removal from His Church. It is the cause of His ternal universal presence, so that we who see Him not with our bodily eyes may be able to touch Him, and hold Him, and have Him with us always. St. John xx. 17. St. Matt xxviii. 20.

At this same time John was baptizing in Samaria. A dispute arises between his disciples and the Jews about his baptism. What was its value now, the Jews would ask, when the greater than he was baptizing? John himself had borne witness that Jesus should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

St. Matt. iii. II. John's disciples appeal to their master in envious vexation, v. 26. But no such feelings find place in his mind. He had come, the lesser before the greater. Such was the will of God for him. He reminds his jealous followers that he had already told them this. He had come to prepare the bride, and to present her to the Bridegroom. 2 Cor. xi. 2, "The bride, that is the Church, is His. I am but the friend of the Bridegroom. Great is my joy, as I hear His voice, and see the bride going to Him. My work now is almost done. I am but of earth. He is from Heaven and above all, increasing ever more until Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of His Glory."

The holy Baptist here speaks in words of personal affection and knowledge. As if He had heard from the Lord's lips the same teaching which Nicodemus had been permitted to hear. As if the Saviour had spoken of these heavenly things to him, and he, for his part, had received the testimony, and in the conviction of his own heart had sealed it true. Again, as in the conversation with Nicodemus, we read of the threefold work of the Blessed Trinity, the Father loving and sending the Son, and giving to Him the fulness of the Spirit, v. 34–35. Again we read of life bestowed through faith in the Son, of wrath and death abiding on the unbelievers.

Grace given by Christ through the Sacraments to the faithful, grace unto life, that is the lesson of this chapter from first to last.

. John before Herod. St. Mark i. 14; vi. 17-20.

Judæa, and public attention was divided between Him and His forerunner. Now has ministry is brought to a close. He has been to face with Herod, the ruler of Galilee, and so spoken some unwelcome truths. For John, he Elijah, I Kings xviii. 17; xxi. 19, boldly buked vice in the richest and strongest as well as the least and lowest.

Herod had sinned by taking to himself Herodias, is brother Philip's wife, having at the same time a rife of his own. Herod appears to have received be rebuke without anger. But the partner of his in could not endure the affront. And at her compting Herod laid hold on John and put him is prison. This did not satisfy Herodias. She could have killed John. Herod, on the contrary, crounded that he was a prophet, kept John from the vengeance. He sent for him often, hearing him ladly, and obeying many of his counsels.

A very wonderful thing is the human heart; excitful above all things and desperately wicked! That a beautiful sight, the king listening to this ithful preacher of repentance, gladly listening, ping many things at his bidding! What an awful ght, this king, with the rebuke of God's prophet unding in his ears, hardening himself in his fullery!

Herod has many followers, men who run any striking preacher, who admit the truth of warnings, who will do a good deal, but cannot up the one deadly sin which poisons their valifie. They have one religion in thought, another act; one for the Church, another for the variety are trying to serve two masters. The double-minded. The evil thing gets the thold over them by degrees. It overpower drives out the good. It goads them on to greater and desperate wrong.

In this John was to Herod what our cons is to us. Conscience is our ever-present at cautioner, restrainer. It speaks, and we, if not altogether hardened, listen. We do mor listen. We obey it in a good many things. to the worst of us, we have our notions of and wrong. There is perhaps always some one which the worst of men would not do. We co ourselves with the notion-" Well, I never di I never could do that. I am not so very bar all. I listen to conscience. I pause and 1 I do a good many things from the fear of Goo and by conscience shall be obeyed more. force of all its warnings." But still we kee science under lock and key, under pressurmust not speak; or at least, it cannot be liste when it crosses our ruling passion. We cannot with Herodias.

So the sin and the conscience, the evil:

an and the Holy Spirit of God, strive together. anwhile we are playing at religion, really doing more than pleasing ourselves, cloosing what we I do. The day will come when Herodias will ther way. Conscience will be silenced. God's loly Spirit quenched within us, for ever. And we hall be the devil's slaves.

77. Jesus at Jacob's Well. St. John iv. 1-9.

HE Pharisees, no longer having John to look to, now remark the success of Jesus' ministry. He, therefore, knowing their

Malice—for they received not his testimony, St. John iii. 32—turns his steps northward to Galilee. And He must needs go through Samaria. Must needs! Not only because Samaria lay between noted a and Galilee, but because He had a work to note there. He cometh to Sychar, a city anciently nown as Shechem, very sacred in the history of God's people. Here God appeared to Abraham. Gen. xii. 6. Here Jacob pitched his tent and built maltar. Here he digged a well; Gen. xxxiii. 18. And here the people were assembled under Joshua to hear the blessings and cursings of the law. Josh. Viii. 33.

At this time Sychar, and the whole country of Samaria was inhabited by the foreign race, brought in by the king of Assyria, seven hundred years before, when he carried the ten tribes of Israel aptives to Babylon. They were then worshippers

of idols; but in time they learned to believe in the God of Israel. 2 Kings xvii. 24. They never united thoroughly with the Jews at Jerusalem, and in the end they set up their own temple and worship on Mount Gerizim, the hill just above their city. Thus they were strangers both in blood and religion; and although on matters of buying and selling they might sometimes meet, in religious worship, in the exchange of kind words and friendly service, there were no dealings between the Jews and the Samaritans.

It is evening. The disciples have gone on into the city to buy bread; Jesus, faint and weary, is resting by the well. We think of Him as having worked while they were resting, His night spent in prayer, the early morning given to preaching and healing among the multitudes. He is weary, hungry and athirst. Now by His weariness He will give rest, by His hunger and thirst He will bring the Bread of Life and the Living Water, to the weary, starving, thirsty spirits of the Samaritans.

A woman comes from the city to draw water. Little does she guess who He is, and what water He has to give. He addresses her, asking for a draught of water, and she gives it Him in womanly kindness, though unable to repress her surprise at His request. He has engaged her in a conversation which is to end in her conversion.

Consider His infinite wisdom and care in this He must needs take this journey, knowing that it

ld be for the spiritual gain of many. He suffers riness, resting by the well, and so is ready for

He speaks to one who would not have spoken Him. He asks a favour from one almost an my, a little favour that He may greatly reward

He draws her on gently, till at last she tells n all, even her great sin.

so He thinks and cares for all. He must needs s through this world of ours, weary and suffer-; calling to us, asking for a little from us, drawing to tell Him our sins and our sorrows. Shall we n a deaf ear? Shall we not rather give Him the le that He asks, that He may reveal Himself as r Christ, and give us His rich reward?

The Woman of Samaria. St. John iv. 10-15.

F the condescensions of Divine love are wonderful, the dulness and coldness of the human heart are scarcely less wonderful.

he work of God is to subdue our will to His, to ake us love Him and earnestly desire Him. And is He does, not by the display of His *power* to ush us into submission, as by the earthquake and e storm, but by His *gentleness*, to attract and win into loving Him, as by the still small voice of rsuasion. I Kings xix. II-I3.

Therefore He bears with us while we doubt and gue. He condescends to reason with us. Isa. i. 3. See how fully this tender forbearance is shewn the history before us. Jesus asks a favour from

the woman. Which of us would not rejoice in the opportunity of bringing Him the draught He asks? Yet she speaks her surprise at His request. What right has He to ask her this? She holds herself free to deny it.

So when the Gospel of His love is preached, and men are called to give Him their affections and their service, they too often deny His right to ask so much from them. They have duties in the world, they say. Their lot is such that they cannot give the time He asks to prayer, self-examination, meditation, and communion with Him. How is it He asks it? He must take something less. He must look upon what they give Him as a favour.

But He will not take this refusal. He speaks to them again of the better gifts which He has to give, the living water of which whosoever drinks shall never thirst, v. 14, while the world's draughts of pleasure dry the palate and scorch the fevered throat. The Lamb shall lead them to the living fountains of waters. Rev. vii. 17. He is ready to give, if only we will ask. For this seems a condition of our receiving, that we should first ask. gift is ready. His hand outstretched. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, He says. Ps. lxxxi. 11. And we, in our folly, which we think wisdom, instead of asking, begin to argue. Whence hast Thou this living water? The well is deep. hast nothing to draw with. Because this Divine blessing is out of our reach, we fancy it must be of His. Because we do not understand the nner of His drawing and giving, we doubt; we I not ask. It is the old story. How can these ngs be? We forsake Him who is the Fountain living waters, and we hew out for ourselves cisns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jer. 13. Fill them as we may, nought is left in them last from the world and the flesh but the thick ul mire of corruption.

It is not into our well that He will dip, however ep it may seem. In Himself is the well of life, i. xxxvi. 8-9; the river flowing for ever. And ho shall drink thereof? Not he that trusteth in mself. But he that believeth in Jesus. St. John i. 38. And he shall never thirst again.

9. The Living Water. St. John iv. 10, 13-14.

ET us see that we understand what this gift is; the Gift of God; the Living Water.

Taken together with all that St. John has

ritten before we cannot doubt that Jesus is speakg of the Holy Spirit. This is told us in so many ords in ch. vii. 39. This spake He of the Spirit, hich they that believe on Him should receive.

The fulness of that Gift was not poured out by iod until the day of Pentecost, when the Holy ihost, the Lord and Giver of life to the whole hurch, the Heavenly Dweller in every faithful soul, ame down in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting pon the Apostles to teach them and to lead them

into all truth; that they in turn might be the ministers of that same Spirit by the preaching of the Word, by Baptism, and by the daying on of hands in Confirmation and Holy Orders. I Cor. iii. 8; Acts viii. 14–19; 2 Tim. i. 6.

Yet although that Blessed Spirit was not yet fully given, He had never been absent from the earth, never been idle since the beginning, when He brooded upon the face of the waters. He had striven with man in the days before the flood. He had dwelt in the great souls of ancient days, in saints and wise men, in Joseph, and Moses, and Joshua, in Judges and Kings, Rulers and Priests and Prophets. He had fitted them for rule and government. He had taught them things to come, for the good of the Church and people of God. He had made His home in the secret place of many a faithful, struggling heart. As witness David's prayer, Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Ps. li. 11. Only by His help could they have endured and prevailed. Only by His guidance could they have walked in that path of shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Prov. iv. 18.

Here the Lord speaks of Himself as the giver of the Gift of God. He saw on into the day when He would fulfil the prophecy, and pour His Spirit upon all flesh. Joel ii. 28; Acts ii. 17. We look back upon the promise fulfilled, the grace given. We have all been made to drink into that one Spirit. I Cor. xii. 13. We have asked, and have

eceived. We ask continually and the promise is till more and more fulfilled. In the faithful heart he Spirit is as a well of water springing up unto verlasting life; flowing on in pure loving word and act in rivers of living water to the blessing of our prethren.

Believe this most surely, that the Holy Spirit is he Gift of God to the Christian in a far fuller sense han to the saints of the Old Covenant. Inasmuch is Christ is in us, so must His Spirit be in us. In he Old Testament we see God working for His people; in the time of the Apostles we see Emmanuel, God with men and among them, in the risible presence of the Man Christ Jesus. Now it is both His work for us, and His presence with us that we rejoice in, together with His dwelling within us by His Holy Spirit.

Do we know this Gift of God? Do we with thanksgiving pray for its continuance, that the Spirit of God and of Christ may for ever dwell in us, refreshing us with His blessed refreshments, until we shall come to the Paradise of God, there to drink of the pure river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb? Rev. xxii. i.

80. The Workings of Grace. St. John iv. 15-26.

HE words of Jesus are not spoken to this woman in vain. His wondrous promises, combined with the tender goodness of His.

manner, have so won upon her, that, hardly comprehending His meaning, she asks earnestly for what He offers. The Gift of God must be good, seeing that He thus presses it upon her. Her doubts, her self-reliance have vanished. Behold, she prayeth. And, in her prayer, all barriers are broken down.

He speaks more freely now, touching her conscience, calling her sins to her remembrance. Like Herod, she has offended against the holiness of married life, but, more humble than the proud King. she bears rebuke, and confesses her fault. willingness to be buffeted for our faults is one of the graces of the Spirit. Confessing, pitied, and surely now absolved by the great Absolver, her heart is set at liberty, Ps. cxix. 32. She perceives that He is a Prophet. She asks Him of what is so near her heart, the place and manner of acceptable worship She learns, what the Jew was so slow to learn, that the true worship of God is not confined to one central spot in God's world. Everywhere the Christian Altar may be raised; everywhere the pure Offering, the Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, be offered, as Malachi had prophesied, Mal. i. 11; everywhere the true and Spiritual worship be paid to God the Eternal Spirit, by the Holy Church throughout the world.

Faulty she was, this woman, a Samaritan too, a stranger to the Covenant of Israel. Yet she was among those who had read and loved the promises. She looked for Messiah, not as a great earthly King.

o much as the Teacher sent from God, one who hould tell them all things. That inner principle of faith which held so many frail and faulty hearts to God was strong within her. And to her the precious secret is imparted. I that speak unto thee am He, the Christ.

Not one moment of hesitation in her now. As the disciples come up, marvelling that their Master should be talking with a woman, she has hurried off to spread the good news. She calls the men of the city. Come see one who knoweth the very secrets of the heart. Ps. xliv. 21. Is not this the Christ? They go forth with her. They see, they hear, they make Him their guest. And ere he departs they have believed, and confess their faith in Him, not for her saying, but as having heard Him themselves; as having set to their seal, out of their own conviction and experience, that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. The Gift of God has flowed on in rivers of living water from her to them.

All this from her one little prayer, Give me this water that I thirst not. And all this again from His "must needs go through Samaria." How small a key opens to us the richest treasures of His love! If only He will first open our hearts. Then may we believe, and carry on the gracious word. And the call shall go from lip to lip; The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst.

come. And whosoever will, let him take of the Water of life freely. Rev. xxii. 17.

81. The True Worshipper. St. John iv. 20-24.

Y worship we mean honour paid to God in the solemn offering of gifts to Him, with the reverence of our bodies, the praise of

our lips, and the devotion of our hearts.

Now-a-days many persons seldom address God except to ask something from Him. There they stop. Their Church-going is chiefly with a view to get good for their own souls. In old times God's people thought more of His glory and praise than of their own wants. The worship of God was the one great object of their gathering together. To put it simply, they brought all they could to God; we go to get all we can from Him.

The first thing necessary for true worship is the knowledge of God. Men of course frame their worship upon their notions of God. The Hindoo thinks that God delights in human pain. So his worship often takes the form of self-torture. He will inflict horrible wounds on himself, or throw himself under the wheels of an idol's car, thinking that with such sacrifices God is well pleased. The Samaritans had formed mistaken ideas of God. The Jews did not know Him perfectly. The heathen lay in gross darkness. Before men could pay God acceptable worship, they must know Him.

The Only begotten Son has declared God to us as

Tather, St. John i. 18. He has taught us to pray Iim as Our Father, as an Almighty Spirit, itely loving, merciful and good. Now that we w this we may be able to worship Him.

low this worship must be in spirit and in truth. spirit, that is, not by a mere outside form. To through a Church service, or even to join in the ds while our hearts are far from Him, is not ship in spirit. We must lift up our hearts d we must believe rightly all that He has revealed Himself. Those who hold false doctrine do not rship in truth.

But remember the word worship in all this. We ist come before God, kneeling before His Altar, wing down our bodies—for this is the meaning of rship—bringing our gifts, offering our praises, eb. xiii. 15. 16. especially on His Holy day. Exod. 2. 8. This is the worship paid to God by the essed ones in Heaven. Rev. v. 6-14. Their worip is the pattern for ours. Who are we that we can rship thus? And what offering can we bring? We are one with them in the communion of ints. We worship the Father, shewing forth the ord's Death. That is the Church's highest act of orship. With His dear Son sacrificed for us, we so offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonole, holy, and lively sacrifice. And so, knowing hom we worship, and taught by His Son what e seeks of us, we rejoice to worship Him in spirit id in truth.

82. The fields white for Harvest. St. John in 31-42.

HE disciples wonder that He should be talking to a woman. For it was the manner of the Jewish teachers to despise women

as unworthy of deep instruction. The religion of Christ has changed this, giving woman her two place as a handmaid of the Lord.

They wonder, but in reverent awe they ask me questions. Already they perceive that many of His words and actions are too high for them, and that they must wait His time of explanation. He is Master and Lord, they His servants.

While they are concerned for His wants. He has forgotten them. They ask Him to eat, and He replies in language which they interpret according to the letter, but which He meant to be interpreted in the spirit. His hunger and thirst was for the souls of men. His meat and drink to save them. Then He points to the fields around them. was to be seen there, for seed time was not long Four months must go by before the harvest would be ripe for the sickle. Such was the spiritual state of Samaria to their eyes, if indeed there had ever been any sowing of good seed among that people. Harvest there could be none, they thought, for many weary years. He saw with keener sight The fields were white already to harvest. people of the city were hurrying to hear Him, to re on Him, to receive Him as their guest. A rears, and Samaria would gladly receive the of God, Acts viii. I-I4. Soon would follow arger harvest of the Gentiles. And finally the 1's great harvest at the end of time. Rev. 14-19.

he disciples who stood around Him were to be ers of that first harvest. Prophets and seers laboured before them, sowing the good seed. It them came John the Baptist. Then Jesus Iself. They should reap, gathering in from Itaria and Judæa almost without labour. Acts I; xix. 20. And though their work was light, It waiting short in comparison with that of the ers, reapers and sowers should equally be reded in eternal life, and share a mutual joy. St. It. xx. 9.

an assurance for us that the New Testament is continuance of the Old. It is in the Gospel that Law and the Prophets are fulfilled. The Church he gathering in of the harvest sown in the fields the Tabernacle.

Observe, again, how the Lord shews us a spiritlesson in all things. From the water of Jacob's Il He goes on to speak of the Living Water; m the food offered by the disciples He passes to spiritual meat of obedience to the Father's will; m the fields to the harvest of souls. The world His lesson book. So it had been to many a wout heathen. Acts xiv. 17; Rom. i. 20. So it may be to the Christian. So may the child of Godin the midst of the world see his Father's hand everywhere, everywhere hear his Father's voice, in everything be reminded of his Father's love, and so his life be hid with Christ in God.

83. The Fewish nobleman. St. John iv. 43-51.

WO days Jesus abides with the Samaritant His word carried conviction to their hearts that He is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. Their faith stands in striking contrast to the unbelief of the Jews who had seen a many miracles, and to the proud contempt which

He met with in His own city.

He now continued His journey into Galilea, passing by Nazareth, His own country, St. Luke iv. 23–24; for He knew that there He should not be received. But many from the other cities of Galilea had seen His miracles at Jerusalem, and were anxious to see and hear Him again. He stops of Cana, the scene of His first miracle.

A nobleman comes from Capernaum entreating Jesus to go and heal his dying son. He has faith faith enough to win the boon He seeks, yet such a needs to be lifted higher. Jesus is able to heal that he knows. Jesus is willing to heal, that he believes; and willing to heal the sick at the prayof a friend. He believes in the power, and compassion, of Jesus, and in His readiness to the prayer of faith interceding for another.

blessed knowledge and faith to him, as it is all! It brings him to Jesus. But what He not know and believe is that Jesus can heal ick at a distance, as well as those in His very nce. He does not know that Jesus can raise lead as well as heal the sick. Therefore he is ring the Lord in the manner of His work. It Come down, and at once, or the child will be Thine help." Jesus, first gently rebuking him, his faith even while He grants the prayer. hy way; thy son liveth.

was an awful trial to the man whose son lay g, twenty miles away. But the words and ner of Jesus have convinced him that his prayer ranted. He hurries homeward, to meet his ants bringing the joyful news that the child is vering. The fever had left him at the hour a the words of Jesus were spoken. The father eved, now with a far higher faith, believed in s; and his household with him.

his might well be termed a special miracle. The lour here shews Himself as knowing what passes nother city, as present there no less than in a, able to save those who have never seen His . This is the Almighty Power of God.

the special lessons of this miracle will be Faith Christ as the Almighty, ever present God, faith His spoken word as mighty to save. We need ask that He should come down to stand among as He then stood at Cana, before He can heal

our sin-sick souls. His words, spoken years ago in that distant country, have lost nothing of their power. And by that word He is yet working with His Church, speaking forgiveness, and healing the souls for whom His aid is sought, that they may be established in the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God.

84. The Synagogue. St. Luke iv. 14-17.

HIS second miracle spread the fame of in Doer far and wide. He was accepted as a Teacher in all the Synagogues. In course

of time He came to His own city, Nazareth; and here, as elsewhere, He went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

The Temple at Jerusalem was the great and national place of worship. There only sacrifice was offered. The Synagogues were less important buildings in every town and village, though conscrated for ever as Houses of God and of prayer by, a special service of dedication. In them there was neither Altar nor sacrifice. Their service consisted chiefly of prayers according to a set form, and psalms, with two lessons read, one from the Books of Moses, the other from the Prophets. And the ruler, or chief officer, of the Synagogue called upon whom he would to be the reader and preacher. We have another instance of this, when St. Paul was invited to preach in the Synagogue at Antioch. Acts xiii. 15.

2

: great day of public worship was, of course, abbath, our Saturday, the seventh day, which and blessed as the day of rest, making it holy orship also. The Son of God, though He was also of the Sabbath, St. Mark ii. 28; though moment of His life was a service of devoand obedience to the Father's will, never ceased ve this day its due honour. At Jerusalem He laily in the Temple; elsewhere He was every ath day in the Synagogue; thus teaching us, lis example, not to forsake the assembling of elves together. Heb. x. 25. He would have member that the worship of God is not the te work of separate souls, but of the Church, vhole body of the faithful. His blessing is espepromised to united prayer; His presence espez assured to those met together in His Name. e stood up to read. And there was given Him Book of Isaiah's prophecies.

e must not suppose that the books in those were at all like our own. There was then her paper nor printing. Skins were dressed parchments so as to receive the ink of the er, and these, joined into one long sheet, formed "Book." Being fastened at the ends to sticks, in the reader held in either hand, they were by unrolled and rolled—opened and turned over, we should say—at his pleasure. To close them, ece of thread was tied round them, and the sealed. Rev. v. i.

Books were therefore scarce and dear. The very parchment was expensive, the labour of copying still more so. None but the rich could afford to purchase even a single book of the sacred writings; and these were in consequence seldom to be found except with the ministers of religion. As for a perfect and entire copy of the whole of the Old Testament, that would be rare indeed, confined to the Temple, the greater Synagogues, and the schools of religious teaching.

The instruction of the people was chiefly by word of mouth, from their parents, Deut. vi. 7; 2 Tim. iii. 15; and from the priests, and the Scribes, Levit. x. 11; St. Matt. xxiii. 2-3. There was also public preaching, sometimes apart from any religious service, as well as in the regular Sabbath worship, Nehem. viii. 1-8. Texts of Scripture were learned by heart, were written on small pieces of parchment, to be carried about, or worn on the person, or inscribed upon their doors and gates. Deut. vi. 8-9.

God be thanked that we live under happier circumstances! What St. Paul said of Timothy is true of almost every Christian in our land, that from his childhood he had known the Scriptures. Happy we, if having learned through the Church the faith which is in Christ Jesus, we have been by these same holy Scriptures made wise unto salvation!

The Sermon at Nasareth. St. Luke iv. 17-30.

ESUS had been teaching in the Synagogues of the neighbouring towns, and the public voice had spread His fame far and wide. ay He takes His place in the Synagogue of own city. The prophecies of Isaiah are handed lim, that He may read. He turns to the age which above all speaks of His Divine intment as a messenger of mercy and power. xi. I. Probably—we cannot be quite sure was the regular lesson for the day. He reads e middle of the second verse. There, not out reason, He stops, and closing the book, He ns it to the minister. Then sitting down upon aised seat of the Teacher, with the eyes of all ned upon Him, He declares the prophecy to be led in Himself. He is the Anointed, the ias, the Christ: anointed to preach good 2s unto the meek; sent to bind up the brokened, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the ing of the prison to them that are bound, to aim the acceptable year of the Lord. This He said, is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. was the message which the Jew, aye, which all vorld, all creation, for more than four thousand , had longed to hear. The year of Jubilee then, come, the fiftieth year, the Sabbath of years of paths: the year of rest for the land, of recovering amily inheritance which had been sold, of freedom to the Israelitish bond servant; the great rest after seven rests, the time of the restitution of all things. Levit. xxv. What that Jubilee was to Israel after the flesh, His ministry should be to the spiritual Israel.

One other portion of the work of the Christ's foretold by the prophet. He should proclaim also the Day of Vengeance of our God. But that we not the Saviour's work as yet. He is sent not a condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. St. John iii. 17. To-day He preaches only the Gospel Story of Divine mercy.

For the moment His hearers are carried away by these sublime thoughts, by the grace of His word and manner. They wonder. And in their wonder and their questionings, they begin to realize what it is He thus claims to Himself. He is but the son of Joseph, the carpenter, one of themselves! And He is claiming to be THE CHRIST! He perceives their jealousy, and meets their objections. They would surely say, if this were true, if He wanted them to receive him as the Christ. He was bound to bring His earliest blessings on His own city and friends. And this He was willing to do. If he did it not, the fault lay not in Him, but in them, by reason of their lack of faith. Of old, no prophet was accepted in his own country. They must remember that the greatest miracles of Elijah and Elisha were done, not for Israel, but for the stranger.

· To the ill-will of secret jealousy is now added

t of resentment under rebuke. Filled with th, they rush upon Him, in the wild frenzy of a bular tumult, and would cast Him down from hill above their city. But by a miracle He es them from the guilt of His Blood. He passed ough the midst of them, and went His way.

Fesus rejected at Nazareth. St. Luke iv. 28-30.

HIS sermon at Nazareth, the first public sermon of the Lord's ministry, seems like the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with aling in His wings. If He is to be acknowledged where, surely, we think, it will be among His n, for they have seen Him throughout these rty years. He has grown up, increasing in favour h them year by year. The only wonder so is that they have not already recognized Him

How is it then that when, after a few months sence, He stands up among them, already famous His words and miracles, they listen to Him ly for a moment, and then try to take His life? They have remembered that with all His gracious rds and mighty works He is only Joseph's son, carpenter, one whom they have seen day after y for these many years. They know Him too all to believe in Him as the Christ of God. Is there no lesson here for us?

the Christ.

We, like these men of Nazareth, have known sus all our life long. His Name has been in our

lips, as Mediator and Redeemer, ever since we first breathed a prayer or spoke a creed. We have had His word in our hands, and the pattern of His life before us, always. We have been daily in His presence. We have often knelt as guests at His Table. We call ourselves by His Name.

And what has all this nearness to Jesus been to.
us? Are we never offended at Him? There are
men in Christian England who know all that we
can tell them of Jesus, and whose hearts are dult,
and cold, and closed against Him by reason of their
knowing Him so well. A heathen's heart, if he
could only be made to listen and believe, would
burn with gratitude and love. But Christians—to
them it is only the old story! the story they know
and are tired of! So Christian men live impenitent and unconverted. So they die in their sins...

Yet they often say, enviously, "Ah, if I had only lived in those days, I could never have resisted the loving face and pleading voice of my Saviour!" Easily said! But the idea is false. Elijah and Elisha, the greatest of prophets in preaching and miracles, found more faith among the heathen than in Israel. Just so, the very men who knew Jesus best, as men see and know, rejected Him, for that very same reason.

Nearness to Jesus, if it be not the greatest of blessings, is the greatest of judgments. 2 St. Peter ii. 21. The heathen may envy us as we may envy the men of Nazareth. But what if our familiarity.

h holy things should harden our heart! An old verb says, "The nearer to Church the farther Heaven." It is sometimes too true.

hose who have known longest, who know most, not always respect, and value, and love most: sometimes despise the quiet beauty of a holy

They undervalue the calm power of the rch's services. They cry for something new, ething striking and exciting. So they reject Christ who is among them, to run after lying ties, and forsake their own mercy. Jonah ii. 8. save us from this rejecting of Christ, lest the multitude of our mercies increase our condemon. St. Luke xii. 47.

The call of four disciples. St. Matt. iv. 13-22.

HE Lord passed through the men of Nazareth, who were seeking His death. For no man should take His life from Him. He ld lay it down of Himself, St. John x. 18, in own time and in His own way. And He came Capernaum, and dwelt there, so that this too an to be called "His own city." St. Mark ii. 1. e again St. Matthew calls attention to ancient thecies in order to win the attention of the Jews. ilee, in the northern part of the land, had been pped of its inhabitants by the Assyrians. 2 gs xv. 29. And the prophet Isaiah, ix. 1, coms the sufferers with the assurance that, where tivity and darkness were now reigning, deliver-

ance and light should first be preached, eve the True Light of the world.

From this time Jesus began His public min taking up the words of John the Baptist. putting with them mighty words of His John could only prepare his hearers. Jesus car The time is fulfilled, the fulness of time in a God was to send forth His Son. Gal. iv. 4. Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, come upon that kingdom of which Daniel wrote, c. vii in which God should reign and not man, unit and eternal, even the Holy Church throug the world. He who would enter therein repent, and believe the good tidings, and must entrance by the Sacrament of the new St. John iii. 5.

We infer from the next verses that the Lor though He had called certain of John's discipl follow Him, had not yet required them to give their worldly business. They were left free with Him, and from time to time to attend to own pursuits, until He finally selected the two whom He also named "Apostles," that is "It is as if He had been alone for awhile, a beginning of His public ministry. He is a dweller at Capernaum, a rich and important upon the sea of Galilee. It was on the short this sea, and in the neighbouring cities, tha Lord chiefly ministered, teaching and wo miracles, for the space of three years.

Walking by the waterside He saw some who had bready acknowledged Him to be the Christ, cleanbg and mending their nets. Their present work a type of their future office. He calls them to follow Him once more that He may make them fishers of men. As Jeremiah had said, ch. xvi. 16. I will send My fishers among you, and they shall atch vou. Simon and Andrew are first called. then James and John, sons of Zebedee. Two and two, they are called as they are afterwards sent forth, St Mark vi. 7, as Moses and Aaron had been sent forth of old. They were humble, unlearned and ignorant men, Acts iv. 13, for He would not conquer the world with worldly wisdom. They were not slothful in business, and so would be diligent in serving the Lord.

And they straightway left all, and followed Him. Worthy in truth they to be Rulers in the Kingdom of Heaven, Leaders of the people of Christ, who at a word can straightway leave all, counting all things but loss without Him, having all things if only they have made Him their own!

88. Jesus at Capernaum. St. Mark i. 21-28.

E are now entering upon the ministry in Galilee. Jesus had preached for about eight months in Judæa, but finding that the Jews received Him not, after John the Baptist's murder, He went to the Galilæans. There He openly shews Himself the preacher of a new king-

dom. He draws disciples to Him again. He to with graciousness, and with power also. No the Scribes, as a mere explainer of the lawith authority, giving commandment as from self, and demanding obedience. He claimed the Word of God, the Giver of the new comment. His word was with power in their left is works will give them outward proof. and special were the miracles He worked day.

Perhaps it was even while He was preaching the service in the Synagogue was disturb the scream of a man that had an unclean spi

The being possessed by a devil was a fo suffering far worse than any bodily disease. than madness. The man possessed by a dev no longer himself, as we say, no longer hi property. He had lost the power of His ow and had become the dwelling place and t strument of an evil spirit. At the same til knew the misery of his condition. groaned under his bondage, and desired to He often felt good desires rising in his but he was driven against his will into foul and unholy actions. For he was, in fact, poss inhabited, tortured, driven by the evil sp work devil's work, yet full of anguish, horre shame. Just like one who in his dream find: self engaged in some dreadful deed at which whole soul starts back in horror, but which he o to the end. The man is possessed, and used as tool, by the evil spirit.

The devils knew—what the men did not know tho Jesus was, the Holy One of God, the Christ, he Son of God. They are afraid that He will use lis Almighty power, and cast them at once into he everlasting fire prepared for them.

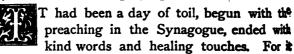
But the Lord does not desire their testimony to tim. God would have neither ungodly men, Ps. 1. 16, nor wicked spirits, take upon themselves to set forth His praise. He at once commands the wil spirit to be silent, and to come out of the man. The evil spirit cannot disobey, but first he does his borst. He threw the man down and tare him. Then, with another loud cry, he left him.

Does not this shew us the mercy and the power of our blessed Saviour? The devils believe and bremble before Him. They who hate Him most, lear most. Nevertheless they obey at a word. Not willingly, for they will hurt to the uttermost. They will make their greatest effort to injure when His salvation is nearest. But He can make their fierceness to turn to His praise. So that men, seeing His power, will crowd around Him, whatever their miseries, and bring their sick to Him, that He may give health and life. And thus blessed by Him, they will wonder and believe the more.

So it was with the people at Capernaum on that Sabbath evening. He healed all, from Simon's wife's mother to the poorest cripple laid at his door.

So He fulfilled another prophecy, Isa. liii. 4; taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses.

89. Fesus alone and praying. St. Mark i. 35-39.



was not until the sun had set, and the Sabbath day ended, that the whole city was gathered at His door with their helpless burdens of sick. He had laid His hands on every one. At last the hour of rest arrived, and the wearied disciples with their Master found time for sleep. And He, being true man, needed repose as much as they, for mind and body equally. How else should He be ready for the labours of each succeeding day?

But as man doth not live by bread alone, so man is not refreshed by sleep alone. There is a strength and refreshment which the table and the bed can never supply. For these we must seek the presence and the word of God. For these we must be alone with God, in some solitary place; apart, that we may hear God's voice; in prayer, that we may make our requests known unto Him.

It is a deep mystery this, a subject for wondering thought, that the Son of God should choose this life of double labour, ministry towards men, worship to the Father. His life of ministry we understand. For this He came into the world. But retirement and prayer—what were they to Him?

ow could the world chill His heart and sepate Him from the Father. He is ever one with e Father and the Spirit. What had He to ask All things that the Father hath are His. evertheless, such was His will and His practice. And so He teaches us that even in the busiest e time can be, and must be, made for serious ought, and prayer, and communion with God. 'e often fancy that prayer is very well for those ho have leisure to pray; but that men and omen hard at work from morning to night, and ll of anxious care, may stand excused. en as well as poor men, mothers of families, all ho are engaged in worldly callings, are tempted think that they will be excused from all but the ry shortest prayers. On what grounds? They e always at work, they say; they have no leisure; e will must stand for the deed.

If they are so taken up with worldly work, their sed of prayer is the greater. What! Do they can to say that they can go on from day to day one unbroken round, their hearts full of worldly re or pleasure, scarcely ten minutes of the day ven to a formal prayer, the Sunday itself hardly scued from the world's vexations? If Jesus eded to go apart with God, how much more they! He could not live without prayer, how can their uls do without it?

His lonely prayers are continued till the disciples d the people have found him, with the entreaty

that He will not depart from them. But His work in Capernaum was finished for the present. He had come to be something more than a healer, a benefactor to suffering bodies. He had come to be a teacher and a preacher of the Kingdom of God. The good tidings of great joy must be preached unto all the people.

90. Galilee. St. Matt. iv. 23-25.

HESE three verses may be said to contain in a short compass the history of at least eighteen months of our Lord's ministry.

He went about doing good, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout all Galilee. His fame spread throughout all Syria. Multitudes followed Him from every city.

The history of the ministry in Galilee is given at length by the three Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. To understand its importance it is well that we should know what Galilee was in extent and population.

That which we now call the Holy Land or Palestine—known in the Old Testament generally as Canaan, the land of promise, and the land of Israel—was in our Lord's time divided into three parts. Of these Judæa was in the South, and Galilee in the North, Samaria lying between them. Judæa, of course, ranked first in importance, as having within its borders Jerusalem, the Holy City, the centre of the nation's religious life as well as

f government. Next stood Galilee, equal perior to Judæa in its population, about s in length, from thirty to forty in breadth. ord's time it was more populous than any ounty except Middlesex. Josephus, a storian, who lived and wrote at the same ie Evangelists, speaks of no less than two and forty large cities and villages. The n of the whole province therefore could we been less than three millions, many iving among the Jews. The soil was rich The great inland sea swarmed with is the merchants, the fishing boats, the 3, and the flowers, lay before the eyes of ers, as our Lord spoke the parables which hese.

a of Galilee, called also the Sea of Tid the lake of Gennesaret, may be looked the chief scene of our Lord's ministry. It fourteen miles long by eight broad, the an flowing through it from North to South. It cities stood on or near its shores; of these were Capernaum, so often called our racity, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Tiberias. lilee Jesus called most of His disciples; spoken most of His parables; here He nany of His mightiest miracles. therefore no quiet life that He was seekquitted Judæa for Galilee that He might er opportunities for good, with less opportunities for good, with less opportunities.

sition. The Scribes and Pharisees had far le power here than in Jerusalem. The rulers were led jealous of Him. The fame of His miracles would carried from lip to lip. The multitudes would for round him from the corn fields and the fishing boat He would be sowing unhindered the good seed broad and fertile fields, that seed of which His diciples were to reap the fruit after His Ascensif Galilee of the Gentiles it had been called. No He was among them, to gather all His sheep in that one fold where the names of Jew and Genti Galilean, Greek, and Roman should all be led in the one better name of Christian.

91. The Mount of Blessing. S. Matt. vi. 1-2

N these three chapters we have the same teaching as is found in St. Luke's sixt chapter, the same in substance though

in word. Many learned and pious writers hold the the Lord preached this sermon twice. It will be enough to consider it as it is given here.

We have seen the Lord preaching throughout all Galilee, and gathering a great multitude around Him. He now leads them up into a mountain probably that which is near Capernaum, now known as the Mount of Beatitudes or blessing.

It was on a mountain that God in old time gave the Law, with thunderings and lightnings are voices; Exod. xix. 16. It is from a mountain that the Son of God will give the new Law, with the till small voice of persuasion. Yet not destroying the Law, as some speak, but fulfilling it, as He exblains how wonderful it is, and how exceeding road, an undefiled law converting the soul. Pix. 7. Of old it had been, Cursed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. Deut. xxvii. 26. Now it is Blessing that He pro-**Bounces.** For He has come to redeem us from the burse of the Law, by being made a curse for us. b Up to this point we have heard nothing from His lips which differs from the ancient teaching. He has been calling all men to repent and amend their lives. So did the prophets. So did John the Baptist. It is true that Jesus adds, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. But He has not yet told us more of that Kingdom than the conditions of admittance into it. Many may have followed Him, truck by His miracles, attracted by the grace and **bower** of His teaching, but never dreaming that they were pledged to more than a stricter keeping of the old law of Moses under which they were living. Now they were to learn what true religion really was, what a disciple of Jesus must be. The Mas-

We Christians being familiar with these words from our childhood, they do not strike us as new or strange. But on the Jew and the heathen they fell like the lightning in the darkest night. The heathen had little respect for goodness in itself,

ter explains the teaching of His school. The

King lays down the law of His Kingdom.

still less for such a character as is here called blessed. They valued a man according to his givet wealth, and influence. They valued show success. They aimed at pleasing themselves winning the praise of men. They despised there meek, suffering, character so like to Christ, and dear to Him. The Jews were hardly wisen. The too valued a man rather for show and power, that for the hidden virtues. They held to the letter & the law; provided the outside was clean they were content. The righteousness of the Scribes Pharisees was enough for them. And now the Gospel trump is sounded, the children of Kingdom are called to hear. Blessed are the poor, the mourners, the meek, the hungry and thirsty, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace makers, the persecuted. This is the character the are to aim at, not one of these virtues, but all, i they are to be blessed indeed.

A hard saying to the Jew! A hard saying to the heathen! Yes, and a hard saying to us. We Christians, who pray that the Spirit of Christ may rule in our heart and conform us into His image, even we too often look down upon those in whom these graces shine most richly; we admire those whose whole life and conversation is a contradiction of them. Where among us is the blessedness He speaks of? We look in vain for it. But woe unto us if we exalt ourselves! Not blessing, but cursing, must then be our lot.

)2. The poor in spirit. St. Matt. v. 2-3.

LESSED are the poor in spirit! A hard saying, even so! A still harder saying according to St. Luke, Blessed be ye poor! unto you that are rich! The blessing is not hed to the inward character only. Poverty, ow estate of those who labour hard for their bread, actual hunger, sorrow, and scorn, these declared blessings, better for the soul than s, and fulness, and pleasure, and the praise of But where is the poor man who would refuse s honestly come by? where is the rich man will make himself poor? Such there were in sy, when faith and love were stronger. But is not the spirit of religion now a days. Any who did so now would be looked upon as a

essed be ye poor! The rich man may guess
he poor man's troubles. The poor man knows
he by that better teacher—experience. He
vs how the cares of this world come between
soul and God, leaving him little leisure or
ortunity to pray, tempting him to doubt his
venly Father's love. But then, on the other
the emptiness of his earthly lot will invite his
to those good things, those eternal riches,
the Lord hath prepared for them that love
the poor man has no one to look to but
The rich man is tempted to fix his affections

on earthly things, to be highminded, to forget that God has given and that God can take away.

But blessed are the poor only when their worldy poorness makes them poor in spirit. To fret, to be covetous, to be dishonest, to rebel against Gods will, this is to lose the blessedness of poverty. This is not to be poor in *spirit*. God would have us filled with the sense of our own unworthiness, thankful when He gives, contented when He withholds, resigned when He takes away.

For what have we to be proud of? Before God we are unprofitable servants and miserable sinners not worthy of the least of all His mercies. Before men, if we in any way excel others, in wisdom, or wealth, or rank, or faith and love, it is not by our own merit, but by the favour of God. What hast thou which thou didst not receive. And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory? I Cor.iv.? The high spirit blinds a man to his needs, Rev.ii. 17, and bars the door against the Saviour who stands without knocking so lovingly and earnestly. The poor in spirit—with these God shall dwell, these He will draw nearer to Him every day.

For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. The Scribes and Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and entered not in. The great and learned among the Gentiles trusted in themselves that they were wise, and entered not in. It was the publicans and sinners, the post

world and the poor in spirit, who found in thes and wisdom and life.

ed therefore is the poor man who rejoices in erty for Jesus' sake, looking for treasure in . Blessed, too, the rich man, who is poor , and honours his poor brother, rememberthe Son of God became poor for our sakes, through His poverty might be made rich.

13 The Mourners. St. Matt. v. 4.

are ye that weep now! Woe unto you that laugh now! St. Luke iv. 21. Another ying! For mourning and weeping are the signs of sorrow. And our idea of blessed-to be freed from sorrow for evermore. Ig belongs not to the sinless Angels. It ipon earth with sin. In sorrow greatly ed, Eve was to become a mother. In sorrow nust eat of the fruit of the ground. How he curse turned into a blessing?

is sense mourning, like poverty, is blessed; of a want within the soul, unsatisfied. It's greatest danger is the being satisfied is world. Constant joy is only another or constant temptation and danger. We wish that earth should clasp us so tightly should forget Death, and Judgment, and r. Think of life without a care, without a

a tear; so many years of pleasure and

teeth which shall never cease.

And have we not cause for mourning? T the anger of God which we have provoked many and grievous sins. Think, still more. everlasting Love which we have despised. of the Grace which we have resisted. Think millions of souls perishing around us, the da honour done to Jesus. How can we help ing? Be afflicted and mourn and weep. L laughter be turned into mourning, and ye to heaviness. St. James iv. 9. For only up row can come pardon. A broken and c heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. Ps. li - Sometimes, through hardness of heart, or fulness, or love of the world, men will not, not, repent. Then, Blessed is the man whor chastenest. O Lord, and teachest him out Ps. xciv. 12. This is the token law. Father's love that He makes us mourn. H

But what if we shrink from mourning? What if e thrust the Lord's afflicting hand away, and compet ourselves with earthly things? Then there will e no room in our souls for His comfort. And herefore no blessing for us. If we are wise we hall choose the mourner's part. We shall stand ith Mary Magdalene and Peter, content to weep literly, if only He will say, "Thy sins are foriven," if He will accept our assurance that we love lim. The saddest heart can taste in His comfort etter things than the world can give in its merest laughter, and will be able to say, In the multude of the sorrows that I had in my heart Thy omforts have refreshed my soul. Ps. xciv. 19.

94. The Meek. St. Matt. v. 5.

LESSED are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth! The Son of God thus places His seal on the Psalmist's words;

s. xxxvii. 11. Meekness is an especially Chrisan grace, like poorness of spirit. Meekness teans patience under injury, a willingness to suffer rong without revenging oneself, gentleness, forearance, forgiveness. This the world has never een enabled to understand and esteem. The orld despises the meek man as a coward. No oubt there are unworthy imitations of Christian teckness. There is a fear of men, a meanness and carelessness about right and wrong, an idletess and tameness of spirit, which are very different spirits.

ferent from the meekness of the Gospel. That is quick to feel, bold to act if need be. The Lord Jesus Himself, the meek in heart, was often moved with indignation, often looked and spoke with anger. But not to avenge Himself. Under all the insults, all the injuries of His enemies, He opened not His mouth. The meekness and gentleness of Christ is the strong, keen temper tamed down to endure and to forgive. Think what this is how contrary to our nature. We suffer, and we are angry. We would revenge ourselves. If we carnot strike and repay injury with injury, we reply with bitter words. That is human nature. That comes from our sense of self-preservation, unchecked by grace. Therefore meekness must be a divine gift, a portion of that spirit which was especially Christ's.

We can understand that the meek and quiet spirit is greatly blessed in the enjoyment of much inward peace. The very heathen, while they despised the meek-spirited man, may have envied the undisturbed calm with which he endured grief, suffering wrongfully. But the blessedness here promised is that the meek shall inherit the earth. How shall we interpret this?

There is a power in meekness which few suspect until they have seen that power make itself felt. The world thinks to gain by a show of force, by boasting and noise, by brandishing its weapons, and threatening. The world persecuted to the

eath that Meek One, and His followers. Yet ave they not possessed the earth? The servant f the Lord shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall us voice be heard in the streets. St. Matt. xii. 19. He is to be in meekness instructing those that ppose themselves. 2 Tim. ii. 25. The perseauted saint has converted his persecutors. The hidden saint has conquered by prayer. The gentle force of Christian life in man and woman and child as softened the hearts of the ignorant, the brutal, the hardened. The meek woman is often strongest in the conversion of the violent. Meekness does inherit the earth, because it is Faith in God; because it leaves God to work in His own time and in His own way. And so the reward of meekness is the triumph of right over might, the establishment of the reign of Love, the inheritance of earth as well as of Heaven.

95 The Hungry and Thirsty. St. Matt. v. 6.



LESSED are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness! Blessed are ye that hunger now! Woe unto them that

are full! St. Luke speaks of all hunger, and so far this saying sounds almost the same as Blessed be ye poor! There is this difference, however. A man may be poor without desiring anything better. But he cannot hunger and thirst without longing for something more than he has, without being stirred up to seeking and working for it. So hunger and thirst signify the wan within. Poverty is only blessed when it brin to this. And so the hunger and thirst of the are blessed because they make a want felt want of the righteousness of God in Christ.

And again, hunger and thirst differ from point his—that they may be felt by the rich. man who has lately been filled has had stren use to good purpose. He has done his work needs refreshment and renewing now. At comes with the right, strong, regular appetithe food and drink which must sustain life. ger and thirst are the sign of the body's health the spiritual life they are signs of the soul's hunless we eat of the Bread of Heaven and of the Waters of Life how shall we live? An can we pray instantly, unless we feel our need

After righteousness; so St. Matthew writes fully. And what is righteousness but Christ self, the Lord our Righteousness, He who is mus Righteousness, and so makes us to be right in Him? Jer. xxiii. 6; 1. Cor. i. 30. Theref hunger and thirst after righteousness is to havinward conviction of our own sins and wea It is to look for relief, to reach out the hand as the parched and starving beggar, to seize it, tupon it, to win Christ. Phil. iii. 8.

Do not think that this heavenly hunger and comes to the heart once only, when it is awakened to its emptiness. It must be felt h

continually, if we would be blessed. "Give us this our daily bread," must be our daily cry. Not red as an often repeated, and so unconsidered, 1, but as the child would cry to its parents if the 1 bread were wanting. Day by day we need pardoning, cleansing grace. Day by day we 1 the refreshing sustaining grace
'e need forgiveness. We need personal holiness.

'e need forgiveness. We need personal holiness. t is, we need righteousness.

nd does He not fill us? Has He not prepared ble before us, where He who spake these words Himself to be the Food and Drink of the His Body and Blood verily and indeed given, n, eaten and drunk, by the guests at His Board? He not give of His fulness in other ways also, they who seek the Lord may want no manner ling that is good?

ord, make us so to hunger that Thou mayest more give us this Bread. Lord make us so to t, that thou mayest evermore give us of the er of Life. So shall we be satisfied with the plenness of Thy House, and be filled, in Thine own yea with all the fulness of God. Eph. iii. 19.

96. The Merciful. St. Matt. v. 7.

LESSED are the merciful! Here the servant of God is called to shew forth towards men the fulness of blessing which he has ved. Here is the foundation law of his life conversation towards his brethren. Our word

"merciful" hardly gives the full meaning.
"mercy" seems to speak of greatness in Him shews mercy, of fault in Him to whom it is si Perhaps "pity" comes nearer, that sorrow compassion, and readiness to help, which a man feels for all who are in distress. And "pitiful" will mark the character; not what but what we feel. A man may be too poor to pity. He is never too poor to feel it, and I only another form of Christian Love.

In two ways we are tempted to sin agains law of pity—by pride and by selfishness. By when we fancy ourselves too much above any sufferer to trouble ourselves about him. A were a lowering of ourselves to enter into hi tress, and join with him, and give him a kind and helping hand. And by selfishness, whe cannot be troubled with his tale, and his re for help. As if he had no right to cast a gover our joy, or to disturb our comfort witl sight of his wounds.

There are many thus proud or selfish. We not admire them. They are not like unto C. We should never think of going to them if we in affliction. But, if we are like them, how destand with us? In condemning them we are demning ourselves. If they have no part in C. neither have we.

In this all the world is agreed, that men m a law unto themselves. With what measure

meet it shall be measured to them again. That is fair. Now the man who shows no pity, how shall he find it?

Look at our dear Lord, our great example. His whole Heart is overflowing with pity. So great, so pure, so glorious, He loves us for ever with the love of perfect pity and sympathy. Therefore He took our nature, that in all our affliction He might be afflicted, even to temptation, even to death. If we would be like Him we must, at least, feel pity. And that for His sake.

Pity must arise out of the knowledge of misery. We do not feel pity unless we know that a man is in distress. Think how low sin has brought us. We need pity for ourselves, and we believe that we have found pity in Jesus, our Saviour. After this, how can we help feeling that same pity, and shewing it to our brother in distress? If we are not pitiful, then we have not the mind of Christ; we have not obtained pity.

Blessed! For they shall obtain mercy, or pity. The man's own law brings the merciful to the right hand of Christ. He is trying to do Christ's work, to save souls. He is full of love, sympathising, active love. The spirit is right, though the mercy be no more than the cup of cold water. He that sheweth mercy shall in like manner obtain mercy. For, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. St. Matt. Exv. 40.

97 The pure in heart. St. Matt. v. &.

LESSED are the pure in heart! We can

all understand this. Though no divine reward were directly promised we know that purity of heart must be blessed. We sigh for what, it may be, we ourselves have lost. We admire its beauty in children. The worst of mean expect it in their wives, and sisters, and daughter. Few would willingly defile the heart of their some and brothers. They feel that the unclean in heart are not worthy to see God.

The heart signifies, in Scripture, the affection, that part of our spiritual nature with which we low and desire. Therefore pureness of heart signifies freedom from all fleshly and unclean imaginations. Pureness of heart is something better than mere freedom from committed sin. It means freedom from unclean thoughts, imaginations, and desires. The Lord looks to the heart. The thought of foolishness is sin.

Pureness of heart is one of the precious treasures of our youth. Parents and teachers are often surprised at the clear sense which young children possess of holy things, and of deep mysteries of godliness, which their elders cannot understand, and therefore despise. How is this? Because these things are spiritually discerned. I Cor. ii. 14. And the pure heart possesses, as it were, a spiritual sense-something more than reason—by which it. pieros.

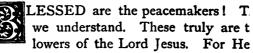
mists and clouds between, and sees God. The pure heart has no such sense. It is blinded and rkened. It cannot see beyond its reach.

This is an awful thought when we reflect how de pureness of heart is regarded among us nowlavs. Pictures, books, conversation, jests, public tertainments, fairs, songs, soon soil the young art. Before it has practised evil it has known it. ad before it has known evil it has desired it. ie forbidden tree, the tree of the knowledge of il as well as of good, stands in the midst of our Happy are they who can refrain from oking at it. For the look goes on to the desire. e desire goes on to the action. The young Chrisin never suspecting his danger, perhaps only oking curiously, has gone in the ways of sin. He is heard words, and learned thoughts, of which he fore knew nothing. If he takes pleasure in the ıful knowledge the plague has begun.

But, it may happen—God bring it so to pass — at he is shocked, and flees as from a serpent. In at case the knowledge of evil has not stained his ul. A man's pureness of heart is not the same a child's. The child's pureness is ignorance, he man's pureness is hatred and resistance of the h. God grant us this latter, that we may keep reselves pure. And, if we have by act, or word, thought, defiled our conscience, the stain must washed out by the Divine forgiveness, sought d won by bitter repentance and confession.

The pure in heart shall see God—yes, ever on earth. For they are likest to the Angels do always behold His Face. They shall I knowledge, a love, of God in Christ, a sense presence which the impure can never know uncleanness shall blind the eyes, and shut or even here. And, then, what hope can ren seeing Him hereafter?

98. The Peacemakers. St. Matt. v.



Peace, having made peace between God an by the Blood of His Cross. He has made too upon earth, gathering together all me His Body, that all should be members another in Him, all brethren.

To make peace between God and man alone. No man can do this for His brothe man can do it for himself. But He has left Church the preaching of the word and the try of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 18-19, wherel ministers may bring peace to the trouble science. Blessed are they in their office!

In making peace upon earth we can al Of all the evils that man works upon earth is none so terrible as war. Thank God, we country know not what war is, except by r or by hearsay. And if war were to bre

road or at home, it is little we could do to stop Still we could pray for peace. And prayer is mething. But there are quarrels, disputes, jealous, often springing up among our friends. Perhaps e ourselves have been offended, or we have offend our neighbour. Well! are we for continuing e strife, or for making peace? Are we siding ith our friend and fanning the flame of his anger? rare we soothing him, persuading him to put away! wrath and malice?

It is often very difficult to bring angry people to friends again, sometimes impossible. The Lord alls us to give up a great deal for the sake of peace. In the never permits us to sacrifice the truth, or to what our conscience tells us is wrong. That is peace which is founded on evil. Still, even then men cannot be friends again, they may lay side their bitterness and wrath. And he is blessed the brings them to this.

The Christian who would be a peacemaker, must begin with himself. He must have no quarels. He must forgive as he hopes to be forgiven. The peaceful man has the best chance of making seace. His very presence and words seem to nothe the angry tempers, and persuade the quarellers to listen to reason. It is wonderful how much a good man may do, if he is known to be seaceful himself, wise in understanding the points of a quarrel, honest in not taking one side more than another, brave in insisting upon what he

believes to be right, prudent in preventing the spread of mischief. Such a man, even in the humblest station, may do Christ's work as a peace maker, and men will call him blessed.

Blessed, because he is helping to make such more like Heaven. Blessed, because he is doing in this lowly way what the Son of God has done in all men, and for eternity.

They shall be called the children of God. Truly they are of their Father in Heaven. Are we of this spirit, careful not to give offence, slow to wrath; ready and generous in forgiving, quick to see peace and to make it among our neighbours?

99. The persecuted. St. Matt. v. 10-12.

LESSED are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake! Blessed are ye who

men shall hate you for the Son of Man's sake! Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! St. Luke vi. 22. Here, as in v. 9, all is easy to understand. In the Christian warfant toil and wounds must be expected. Persecution was sharp in the early times. For nearly three hundred years every Christian held his life, so to speak, in his hand. In almost every congregation might be seen those who bore in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus, glorious scars of warfant and persecution. And in a lower degree all who

would live godly in Christ Jesus suffered persecution of some kind. 2 Tim. iii. 12. They were ill treated

B spoken of; were defamed and made as the filth of the earth. I Cor. iv. 13. But they endured, by faith, as seeing Him who is invisible.

- As we read the sacred stories of the martyrs we sometimes tempted to envy them. Our hearts all us that it must have been indeed a blessed hing to suffer and to die for the Lord. We think the promise, Great is their reward in Heaven. Ind then we look into our own lives, to see whether are not suffering something too which may give a claim to share their glory.
- But it is not all persecution, it is not all unkindess, which brings us under the shadow of this lessedness. It often happens that a man, through is own fault, gets disliked. If men avoid his empany, and find fault with him, and persecute im for this, is he therefore blessed? Not at all. is not for Christ's sake that this comes upon im, but for his own sake, and because he is in eart unlike Christ. I St. Peter iv. 15. The aviour's blessing is upon those only who suffer for ighteousness' sake, and so for His sake.
- When a man suffers as a Christian, then it is tell. And though the sharp persecutions have one by, and we are not now-a-days called to die of Christ's sake, yet it is equally true now as then that whosoever would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. The boy who will never that this tongue speak a bad word, who never forgets morning and evening prayers, the girl who

rafuses to wear showy, finery, and to go to place of dangerous amusement, the men and women wie hold to the Church, and never turn their backs upon the Lord's table, all who make a principle of religion, who do right for right's sales, that is, to Christ's sale, they will be personted.

Will they endure it, and obtain the great mant.

It is easy to say, "Why, what harm can see hard words do them?" But even words have tempted many from God. And sometimes were persecutions may come than words: May God Holy Spirit give us grace to suffer patiently and to endure to the end.

Let it be our encouragement and strength the all the saints have suffered, that Jesus, our Head suffered worst of all. And let us pray Him that we may be able to do right, steadily, yet meekly giving no offence in anything; and then to suffer if need be, with gentleness, lest by any anger and revenge of our own we lose the blessing, and turn what should have been persecution for righteour ness' sake into a rightful punishment for sin.

100. Fesus the Blessed above all. St. Matt. v. 3-12

HE Beatitudes, as we call them, shew to mankind the character which the Lord Jesus requires in His disciples. He

here given us a wisdom which was to the Jews stumbling block, and to the heathen foolishmen. Neither built their lives upon such rules as then

Neither would have seen the beauty of such a character. Can we see more clearly than they? Do we desire to be such as the Lord Jesus here declares blessed? Do we try to bring up our children accordingly? That will be no bad test.

For, after all, this is the character of the Lord Himself. Was he not poor—poor in earthly things, for He had not where to lay His head: boor in spirit, for He left Heaven to live despised and rejected upon earth? Was He not a mourner. weeping over Jerusalem, and so over all who knew not the day of their visitation? Behold and see if there was ever sorrow like unto His sorrow. Was He not meek, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and, instead of calling for the twelve legions of angels, St. Matt. xxvi. 53, gave Himself up into the hands of wicked men? Did He not hunger and thirst, He who fasted for forty days and forty hights, who cried out in His death agony, "I thirst?" Yes, and after righteousness, when He dedared it to be His meat to do the will and work of His Father? St. John iv. 34. Was He not merciful. He who had pity upon the weary hungry multitude, St. Mark viii. 2; who, in His greater mercy, so pitied a sinful world that He came to redeem it with His own Blood? Was He not pure in heart, He who is the Lamb of God without spot, the Word, whose very look is a consuming fire, purifying the heart? Was He not the peacemaker, who by the Blood of His Cross has made reconciliation

between God and man, the At-one-ment, in a bond of everlasting peace? who has given peace on earth, peace in our hearts, such as the world can neither give nor take away? And was He not persecuted for righteousness' sake. He who was the scorn of men and the outcast of the people? Was He not reviled and accused of all manner of evil falsely, persecuted even unto death? The first place is His in lowliness and suffering. And therefore the first place is His in blessedness. the Kingdom of Heaven, where He shall reign for ever and ever. His is the Eternal Comfort, when He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. His is the inheritance of the earth, for the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. His is the perfect fulness; His glory is the fulness of the whole earth, Isa. vi. 3. His is the fulness of God, which His people receive of Him. Eph. iii. 19. He shall obtain mercy.—pity that is, for even His enemies shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and shall be smitten with pity at the sight. And so, weeping at the foot of His Cross, they shall receive of Him that mercy which He has obtained for them from His Father. He shall see God; for He alone can dwell in the unapproachable Light. He shall be among the children of God, the firstborn among many brethren, True Son of God. His again is the Kingdom of Heaven, and in an exceeding great reward. For His is the Name above every name, before

ŀ

which every knee shall bow. His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, on the throne of His Father, for ever and ever, Amen.

Therefore doth He rejoice. Therefore is He exceeding glad. Persecuted, smitten, slain, He hath prevailed, and is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, God over all, blessed for evermore. That which He preached He hath also done, that we might follow Him. That which He promised He hath won, that He might give it unto us.

101. The Lights of the world. St. Matt. v. 13-16.

T is to the disciples that these words were spoken first of all. For how shall they who are to be teachers go forth unless they have

themselves first learned? And how shall they teach unless they can shew forth the truth not only in their lips but in their lives?

They are sent into the world to preserve it from corruption, sent to be the salt of the earth. But what if the salt have lost its savour? Salt long exposed to rain and sun, or lying next the damp floor of the warehouses, loses all its saltness and is then entirely spoiled. It becomes not only useless, but mischievous, so that it destroys all growth. No man suffers it to be scattered on his field. It must be thrown into the roadway, where it is trodden under foot. Woe to the world, then, if its teachers be as salt without saltness! Woe, worse woe, to the teachers themselves! Their lot shall

be to be cast out, trodden under foot. There is middle goodness and use for them. They n preserve the world from corruption, or become rupt themselves.

They are the light of the world. Here another image. They are set as lights, each or them. Together they will be, in their ministry a city set on a hill. And perhaps the Lord, as said these words, pointed to some neighbou city, with its fair white towers rising among hill-tops of Galilee. They are set up where all must see them, to imitate their virtues, or to p to their faults. They are lights set up by Him True Light and Teacher; not hidden away, put on a candlestick, the seat of the holy min of the Word, to give light to all that are in House of His Church.

He gives to the disciples His own Name, Light of the world; for He will be in them, shi through them, speaking by them, wherever go. Whosoever heareth them heareth Him. V soever despiseth them despiseth Him. St. I x. 16. Lights of the whole world they are to Not as the prophets of old, sent only to the J or to some few among the Jews, in rare and spemessages, but like their Master, lights to light the Gentiles also. They are to preach everywh St. Mark xvi. 15. Therefore they are to let the light so shine in the sight of men that all may and imitate, and glorify God. I Cor. xi. I.

This last command seems, at first sight, to conmade the laws of Christian modesty and the premepts contained in the opening verses of the sixth
chapter. But look to the motive, and the difficulty
manishes. We may not do our good works in order
to be seen and praised by men. We must do them
mavely, and fearlessly, and openly, lest men should
think us ashamed of Christ. The Ministers of the
Church must teach by example as well as precept,
they must lead as well as exhort. This must be
ours also, however lowly we may be. For the
least of us may help a weaker brother by boldness
in doing what is right for Jesus' sake.

102 The inner Law: Forgiveness. St. Matt. v. 17-26.

LREADY the people had been astonished at His doctrine. And some were suspecting that He was come with His new teaching

to set aside the Old Law altogether. His enemies seized upon this idea, and used it against Him. They accused Him, and His disciples after Him, of speaking against Moses. Now all the people knew that Moses had been sent from God to be their law-giver, the Mediator of the old Covenant. Therefore They were quite ready to believe that, if Jesus taught contrary to Moses, He must be teaching falsehood.

The Lord pities the people so easily misled. And now that He is putting forth what will seem

to them to be new doctrine. He warns them against the error which might so easily take root in their minds. He is come not to destroy the law. come to fulfil it in every letter, in every least part of every hidden meaning; writing it on the heart; and requiring that every thought shall be brought into obedience of His law, 2 Cor. x. 5. Not the smallest of the letters, in either dot or crossing, shall be set aside as unmeaning. He, the Lord, fulfils them first. So must His Apostles after him. If they shall be as the Pharisees, teaching commandments without keeping them themselves. St. Matt. xxiii. 4, their place in the Kingdom shall be the lowest; if indeed they enter therein at all. The Christian's religion is not in word, or in show. It must be better than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees: not a formal and outward obedience to the letter, not a display of fastings, and prayers, and almsgivings, to be seen of men; but the righteousness of modest bravery, hearty and thorough.

For instance, it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. As long as a man stopped short of downright murder, he thought himself free from guilt. Not so, henceforward, under Christ's fulfilment. I say unto you more than Moses ever taught; I say that causeless anger, the contemptuous, threatening word, the curse and the desire of evil upon a neighbour's head, shall bring the offender, as it were, under the different courts of the

wish law. The curse, and the desire of evil upon brother's head, shall be visited as murder. The offender shall be in danger of hell fire, as one verily wilty of murder. The law of Christian revenge is forgiveness. There can be no acceptable worship God when a man is in malice, or envy, or any wher such grievous crime. He has no right to apbroach God's Altar. Let him first go and be conciled to his brother. Then He may draw near eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. And at him make haste, lest the sun go down upon his wath. Eph. iv. 26. For if either party to the quarrel die, the cause will go before God. And if have been extreme with our brother, we cannot expect Him to be merciful to us. What if we, by refusing to forgive, find that we have shut the door of God's mercy against ourselves for ever!

103. The law of the Seventh Commandment. St. Matt. v. 27-32.

REAT indeed, we may be sure, was the astonishment of His hearers at this explanation of the sixth Commandment. They

had never understood it so before. They were slow of spiritual sight, hard of heart, and dull of understanding. They had thought many cruel, bitter thoughts of revenge; they had spoken many cruel, bitter words of abuse, and threatenings, and cursing. And now He tells them that these thoughts and words are in reality murder; falling

short of it indeed, but only just falling short of and deserving the punishment of Hell fire.

Eighteen hundred years have passed since it spoke. Yet Christians, with the Church's teading, and with the Bible in their hands, have hard learned the lesson. Causeless anger and bitte cursing are not yet altogether removed from outlips and hearts.

The other commandments must be interpreta in the same way, not by the letter but by the spirit. They are broken not by the action only but by the word and the wish. The gaze of unhole desire is already adultery in the heart.

How this stern close teaching brings sin home to us! We are so quick to judge our neighbours, are ready to boast, because we have never done there things, never taken away another's life, never committed adultery. Who art thou that boastest Hast thou never cherished malice, never spoken an angry word, never wished evil to befall thy foe? Hast thou never let thine eye wander and rest on forbidden objects, never suffered thine ear to listen to the unholy word, never suffered the impure imagination to have play, never spoken, never wished for, that which would have soiled thy whole being; which, thus thought of, has already soiled thine heart? He that is without sin, let him first cast the stone at his neighbour.

How then to keep this law of love and purity? By cutting off opportunities. By taking heed thy tongue; by making a covenant with thine turning them aside lest they behold vanity; edging up thine ears as with thorns; by ing thy thoughts. All that ministers to sin, at gives occasion of sin, must be put away, if it were dear to thee, and as much a partee, as eye, or hand, or foot. Better for to enter into life, blind, or halt, or maimed, enjoy what could only be to thee a body ath.

ere is another breach of the original law of 7, allowed by Moses, and now forbidden by terner Teacher. The husband shall not put his wife except for the cause of unfaithfulness, whoever marries a divorced woman comth adultery. That was the original law, from reginning. And He who is greater than s now repeats it.

t He speaks more fully upon this matter here. St. Matt. xix. 3-9.

The law of the ninth Commandment. St. Matt. v. 33-48.

GAIN, with regard to the words of our lips, Christ shews himself a sterner teacher than Moses. Of old time the ninth commandwas understood to forbid all false swearing, hat bore witness in God's Name was bound to truly. He that vowed a vow was bound to

One of the first and simplest virtues is truthfulness, honesty in word. Yet it is one of the rarest At the same time, so deceitful is the heart, that me are often bold enough to tell a lie, but not bold enough to swear to a lie. They are afraid to call upon God as a witness to their falsehood. Therefore, in the cause of justice, the witness was compelled to swear, calling upon God to deal with his according as he spoke truth or falsehood. The came attempts to break through the bonds of the oath. Curious differences were invented. One oath was considered more binding than another. So that, in the end, the swearer came to have no more respect for his oath than he had for his word. He could always persuade himself that the oath was not binding.

Therefore the Lord would bring back our conversation, our words, our witness, our vows and promises, to the simplest form. Swear not at all, neither by the greatest thing nor the least. Let a simple "yes" and "no," simple assertion and simple denial, suffice in all your communications. The violent calling upon God in support of what we say, the vow, in His Name, that we will do this or that, is dishonour to Him, for it takes His Holy Name in vain. After all it is not needed. A true man's word is as good as his oath. And what shall be said of profane oaths and curses? The speaker prays that all manner of dreadful things may happen to him, that he may be damned, perhaps—"

often he neither does it, nor attempts it. he has prayed the Almighty to cast him into al damnation with the devil! Is not this very cing? There is the danger of hasty oaths. Here is, however, one kind of oath which the never intended to forbid by these words—the in oath in the Court of Justice. He Himself ented to answer when put upon His oath, St. xxvi. 59; and St. Paul tells us that an oath onfirmation is to men an end of strife. Heb. vi. In such cases the solemn appeal to God is not dden. It is indeed an appeal to Him as the of Truth, the Executor of Righteousness ben man and his brother.

He must even give to him that hath done wrong. He must pray for them that ill-use So, by active well-doing, he may win the ings. Here is his pattern—to be perfect even s Father in Heaven is perfect.

105. Almsgiving. St. Matt. vi. 1-4.

HE Lord had just now been requiring bedness, ch. v. 16. He goes on to require models that ye do not your

righteousness—this is the word He uses—before men, to be seen of them. He goes to the motive For it is the motive which makes our actions be pleasing or displeasing in God's sight.

Man's life before his Maker may be divided in his duty to God, his neighbour, and himself Therefore we pray for grace to live a godly, right eous, and sober life. Godliness will be show chiefly by our prayers; righteousness, or justic, by our preferring our neighbour to ourselves; soberness, by our keeping our bodies under control; to put it in three words, by prayer; alms giving, and fasting. Still these three duties may be done in such a way as to forfeit the Divine blessing. A man who does what is right for the praise of men, may have his reward. cannot have a reward from God too. Many of the Jews prayed, and fasted, and gave alms. They did right things. But they did them in this wrong spirit; to their own great loss. The motive was bad-

For instance, when they gave alms, they sounded a trumpet before them. This gathered a crowd; and the money was thrown down in the midst. All who saw it shouted in praise and thanks to the generous giver.

But what goodness was there in such a gift? here: was no love for the poor, the weak, the affering; the friendless. The gift would never each: them. The scattered coins would be picked up by the idle, sturdy beggar, not by the aged, the widow, the child, the cripple, and the blind.

The whole thing was hypocrisy, that is, acting. The "hypocrite" is an actor; one who takes a character, a face, a voice, which is not his own, and goes into a theatre to play a part. So such a giver would play the part of the charitable. But there would be no charity in his heart. He would be salv an actor. And he would have his reward in the shouts and clapping of hands of the spectators. : The almsgiving which God loves, must be secret; minstaking, careful. To scatter money broadcast does more harm than good. True religion is to Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. St. James i. 27. It is to give what we have to give mifully, lovingly, quietly, for His sake who has so wed us; so quietly as almost to hide from the left hand what the right hand doeth. The Father which seeth in secret; seeth this, and will reward. spenty. But they who give for a show and for the maise of men, they have their reward; have it, and carry it away. There is the end of it.

How then shall we give, so as not to lose our reward? Sometimes we must give openly, lest men mistake our secrecy for grudgingness and meanness. Otherwise there is the almsbag and the

106. Prayer. St. Matt. vi. 1-8.

HE same caution, the same instruction laid down for prayer as for almsg Many of the Jews prayed, as they

alms, not to win a blessing from Heaven, but seen of men. In this, too, they were hypo actors, merely playing a part. The right ic prayer is the asking something from God, be we want it, because we believe that we canno it unless He give it us, and because we believe He is ready to give on our asking. But hypocrites loved to pray in a very different They stood up in the Synagogue, where all might see them, or they took their place in central place where two or more streets menthere, lifting up their hands to Heaven, they p

e men. True prayer is the secret communion e soul with its Lord. It is too sacred for the and ears of the world. God and our own soul. is all we are conscious of when we are really ing, crying out for pardon, entreating for grace. shrink from the eyes of men. We seek the tness of the closet, the loneliness of the moor or hill. Or, if this be not within our reach, if we so poor that our narrow home gives us no quiet ier, so busy that we cannot seek the loneliness he country, we may be able to find a closet, as ere, some quiet corner in the House of God. ere we may, like the poor publican, St. Luke i. 13, make our humble prayer. Or if not thus, can pray in the secret hiding-places of our rts, where no mortal eye can see, no mortal ear r our sighs and cries.

Ie who seeth in secret shall hear and reward nly.

and this, again, the Lord teaches—that the ver of prayer lies not in many words, or noisy lamations. "O, Baal, hear us!" was the cry of false prophets from morning even until noon. ings xviii. 26. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," the shout of a city for two long hours. Acts. 34. So do the heathen pray now-a-days. d some among Christians will pray as if the ltitude of words, and the strength of the voice, de the prayer to prevail with God. Not so, r Father knoweth. Not the much speaking, but

the humbleness and earnestness of the heart, avail with him; the spirit of the prayer, not its words.

Lord, teach us to pray. Lord, hear our prayer, and let our cry come unto Thee.

107. The Mystery of Prayer, St. Matt. vi. 9.

REAT is the mystery of prayer. For what is prayer? Man, the creature, the sinner, goes into the presence of God, his Maker

and his Judge, asking for all good things. Whis and what are we that we should teach the Divise. Wisdom what we need?—that we should trouble the Divine Goodness with our requests?—that we should dictate what He shall give and what He shall withhold? We are not worthy of the least of His mercies. Our rightful place is at His footstool, there to wait with fear and trembling for the punishment we deserve.

But He raises us up, and commands us in everything by prayer and supplication to let our request be made known unto Him. Phil. iv. 6. And lest we should yet fear and be dismayed, He gives be exceeding great and precious promises, and confirms these promises to us in His Son. We may make use of His Son's Name. His Son Himself is our Mediator and Advocate, taking our feeble prayer, and presenting it to His Father.

. And, again, lest we should be overwhelmed with fear in the awfulness of the Divine Presence, the Lord Jesus Himself has given us a form of prayer.

Il often happen to a man that, in his greatest of earthly help, he cannot put his wants into s. He feels too humble, too afraid to ask vants to be taught how to ask. He will get a bour to write a petition for him. Even if els sure of being able to say what he wants, afraid of using some hasty or disrespectful

And so, perhaps, he puts off asking for the that might have saved him from ruin or from

e disciples of Jesus felt their unworthiness, hey very wisely asked their Master to teach to pray. St. Luke xi. I. In reply He gave the prayer, which we call the Lord's prayer, ng them how they were to address the Great of Heaven, and what things they were to ask, ery day came round.

itself a prayer for all Christians, at all times, also a model for longer prayers. We may ge upon it, making known our wants more

But even then we shall hardly have asked ore than is contained here. The wisdom and of Jesus in these words covers all our wants. therefore the Church, from the beginning, in ublic services uses this prayer of her Lord's, it often, now in penitence, now in praise, now anksgiving. Therefore she teaches all her en to use it as they daily tell their Father of own particular wants. For praying in the of Jesus, and in the Name of Jesus, we know

that we shall be heard, and answered; and that our feeble prayers shall turn the Almighty Hand to order all things for our good.

108. Forms of prayer. St. Luke xi. 1.

T. MATTHEW gives us the Lord's prayer in connection with Christian forgivenes; St. Luke in connection with the request that the Lord would teach us to pray. There is slight difference too in the wording of the prayer, And in St. Luke's Gospel the Doxology is not found. But the prayer—given, some think, on two separate occasions—is the same. After this manner, pray ye; when ye pray, say, "Our Father."

Is it not surprising that in the face of this precious gift, this plain teaching, men will yet be found objecting to forms of prayer? As if that prayer which follows a set form of words must needs have no life in it. This is an important matter; because herein lies one of the great differences between the Church and those who have separated from her. They forbid, for the most part, forms of prayer. She provides them.

Let us see then what can be said for forms of prayer.

Public worship is intended to be the mind of a whole congregation humbly and intelligently made known to the Almighty by the words of one or more speakers. If we know beforehand what prayers are to be used, there is no lear of our

oaching God with rash and disrespectful expressions. Eccles. v. 2. We are sure of speaking hum-We perfectly understand what the minister sking for, so that we can say *Amen* heartily. congregation can take their part in united ship, without wanting to break in upon the ister with unseemly interruptions.

nd this way has been approved by God, and wed in His worship by the Jews under the Old enant as well as by the Christians under the v. The worship and prayers in which the Lord is joined, both in the Temple and the Synagogue, e according to a set form. The Angels and ssed ones in Heaven sing their praises with united the according to a set form. Rev. iv. 8-11. All is have their hymn book. Why should they n find fault with the Church's prayer book? Ince more; the Lord Jesus gives His disciples set form. When ye pray, say, Our Father. Ere is an authorized form for him who would y, as well as a model for all prayer.

But is then the agonized cry of the broken heart, strong thanksgiving of the delivered and triumint child of God, to be tied down to set forms. the Christian never to pray without a book? Nay; the rules for public worship need not tie vate devotion. In his closet let every man pray his own words, if he will. No form written by other, no words spoken by another, can so fully press his wants. Happy is he to whom is given.

the gracious gift of prayer, the indwelling of the Spirit teaching him what to pray for as he ought, and making intercession within him. The shortest, simplest prayer from the heart reaches the ear of God. But, if we can find no other words, the Lord's prayer is always ours to use. And, after all, can the most eloquent tongue improve upon the words of the Lord Jesus?

109. Our Father in Heaven. St. Matt. vi. 9.

Y what name shall we call upon God? By what name will He permit us to address Him? For so we shall declare our faith is

Him. So will He bind Himself to hear.

Our Father. This title, like a mighty wave, carries us at once from the Law into the Gospel. Although the Jews under the Old Covenant sometimes spoke of God as their Father, we nowhere find them calling upon Him in prayer by that Name. For not yet had the Son of God made men very members of Himself, not yet had they received the Spirit of adoption. Now, by the Incarnation, taking upon Him our flesh, the Son of God has given us power to be Sons of God; He only, being the Son of God, hath declared the Father unto us and calls us brethren.

There can be no real prayer until the heart has known, and believed in God, and loved Him.

Therefore the beginning of the Lord's prayer is a sort of short creed. All false worship, all unbelied, all.

and imperfect Christianity, arises from ignorance our Father. The heathen have thought of God cruel tyrant, delighting in blood. Therefore: v have worshipped him with cruel sacrifices. ring their own children. Others have thought. God as a glorious Being, too glorious to cast His: s upon the suffering world. Therefore they have. yed from prayer and worship, as useless. Some: ristians even have thought of God as a cruel. ful Being, shutting many of His creatures outsalvation by an eternal decree, forbidding them: be saved. All false ideas, every one! God is ve. God is our Father. He would have all to saved. He gives us by His Son this blessed urance that we are all His children; in one sense creation. Acts xvii. 28; in an infinitely closer se by our union with His Son. The Gospel is for ; Baptism for all; then the blessed assurance t all the baptized have been made children of. d. have all the right to call God "Our Father." 1. iii. 26; iv. 7; I St. John iii. I.

Our Father—that was the first prayer said over when we were admitted by Baptism among the Idren of God. Our Father—so we may pray in: bitterness of repentance. St. Luke xv. 18. It Father—when in the blessed Communion of rist's Body and Blood, we have renewed our nship with God. Our Father—whenever we ay—always.

And Our Father—not my Father—because in

the unchangeable One; in Heaven—and so afar off ever present, hearing, seeing, helping all things; in Heaven, our country, calling set our affections there, Col. iii. 2, to have or versation there, to look from thence for the of the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, to dwe us for ever. Phil. iii. 20–21.

110. Hallowed be Thy Name. St. Matt.



F knowledge of God is the foundatio prayer, reverence for God is the co of our praying aright. And so our

petition is that the Name of God may be and feared throughout all the earth. The of God is God Himself, first, and then al which He has put His Name—His Word, H His House, His Ministers, His People.

: Kingdom of God, to pray that all the world by ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto s Name. Ps. xcvi. 8.

How then shall God's Name be hallowed? Thy ame, O God, is Great, Wonderful, and Holy. xcix. 3. Can we make It holy, as if It were unholy fore? No. But we can treat It as holy, by holy orship, and all outward reverence; by sanctifying e Lord God in our hearts, I St. Peter iii. 15, firmly lieving in His Name as the revelation of Himself, ambly doing His will from the heart.

For we are called by His Name. Jerem. xiv. 9. e are a people made holy unto the Lord. Therere we pray here for ourselves that we may have ace to live worthily of His Name. Every sin we iristians commit does dishonour to that Holy ame.

No one who prays this petition from the heart puld take God's Name in vain by profane swearg, or by jesting at holy things and holy persons. It there is too much reason to fear that God's oly Name is not always rightly hallowed even in ligious conversation. The Jews held the Name the LORD JEHOVAH in such reverence that they ever pronounced It when reading their Scriptures, it put some other title in its place. The disciples lled their Teacher, Master and Lord, and they d well. St. John xiii. 13. It is very painful to a verent mind to hear the easy familiar way in hich some people speak of God, and the Lord.

Jesus Christ, as glibly as if they were talking of some companion of their own age and rank. Reverently let us speak the Name of GOD. Reverently let us bow the head at the Name of JESUS, as the Church commands. For, dear as it is to us, it is yet a Name Glorious and Fearful. Deut. xxviii.58.

111. Thy Kingdom come. St. Matt. vi. 10.



SECOND petition for God. As God's Name is for ever holy, and yet we are taught to pray that it may be hallowed, so God's

Kingdom is everlasting and over all, Ps. cxlv. 13. and yet we are taught to pray that it may come For while His Kingdom in power extends throughout all creation, His Kingdom in grace is not yet fully manifested. The kingdoms of this world are still claimed by Satan. St. Matt. iv. 8-9. are not vet the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Rev. xi. 15. False religion prevails, the worship of the devil and of idols. Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, misrepresent or deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. The fear of men, or the praise of men, is the ruling motive with many. Falsehood, violence, and wrong, dwell in the dark places of the earth. Even in Christian lands false doctrine, heresy, and schism, beguile unstable souls. These evils will never be cured until God's Kingdom shall come—come in the faith and grace of the Lord Jesus, and His Holy Spirit reign in all hearts. For that good time we pray, knowing at our prayers will be answered. The Lord began r preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. By word and miracle He taught men to look for it. He appointed unto His disciples a kingdom. St. Luke xii. 29. He taught them in the great forty days fter His Resurrection the things pertaining to the Lingdom of God. Acts i. 3. That Kingdom is lis Church. And we look for the time when the hurch of Christ shall possess the whole world, then men of all nations shall be brought into the itizenship of the Heavenly Jerusalem under Christ are King, holding one faith, fulfilling one law of love, beying those whom He has set to rule therein, leb. xii 17; bound together in brotherly love, ghting side by side against a common enemy.

This prayer He is fulfilling day by day. His riests go forth at home and abroad, taking up heir Master's word, preaching the Gospel of the Lingdom, bringing all men into the obedience of he faith. He is working with them by the gentle is in their learts, until that wicked one shall be destroyed, Thess. ii. 4, and all shall know Him, and adored lim, as their King and their God.

We, each in his own place, must hasten that Lingdom, living as loyal subjects of our Heavenly Ling. Each must serve the Lord Christ, fighting gainst the devil, the world, and the flesh. So may be win others to obedience of the laws, the customs, the ministers, the spirit, of the Heavenly Kingdom.

When we pray for the Kingdom of Grace, v for the whole state of Christ's Church militan is, fighting—here on earth. When we pray Kingdom of Glory we pray an even larger 1 we pray that we, with all those that have de this life in the true faith and fear of God'. Name, may have our perfect consummation bliss in His eternal and glorious Kingdom, a soon. (Office for the Burial of the Dead.)

Thy will be done. St. Matt. vi. 1



GAIN, a prayer for God. Again, a which some might think unmear unnecessary. For what creature ca

the Will of the Almighty Creator?

· But God's will is not done upon earth. not? Why should the unruly wills and af liction, confusion, wrong, and trouble. So it it be as long as men seek their own will instead Fod's Will.

Ve sometimes say "Thy will be done" as a yer of resignation. So our Lord prayed it. Luke xxii. 42. So did the disciples at Cæsarea. Is xxi. 14. What a blessed thought in all our ables that we have a prayer to offer which the of God first taught us, and then hallowed by own use! Thus in all our sorrows we may offer will in union with His Will, as a sacrifice to Father in entire resignation.

But this is not all, or nearly all, the meaning of spetition. We desire that His Will may be done earth. It is a prayer for His glory, that He may in supreme everywhere. It is a prayer for the ild; for this is His Will that all men should be ed, and come to the knowledge of the truth; they should be sanctified; that they should delivered from the evil; that they may no longer ist His Will, but do it from the heart.

Here is our pattern—as in Heaven, so in earth. Heaven there is but one will—the Will of God. e holy Angels obey it quickly, perfectly, dly. Even so should men do God's Will upon th, after their example.

This petition helps us, also, in our worship. The y Angels set us a perfect pattern of worship as ll as of obedience. There is no silence, no dull-s, no formalism in their worship. All in Heaven

is bright, and glorious, and spiritual. There is the . Lord seated on His glorious throne; there the Seraphim fall down before Him, veiling their face, as they sing, Holy, Holy, Holy. Moses was con-.manded to make all things for the worship of Gets people according to the pattern of the heavest things. Heb. viii. 5. And, therefore, our Churche. in their beauty and services, should make us think of Heaven; our worship must be after the patter of those heavenly spirits.

The hearty desire to do the Will of God is the cure of all ignorance, all discontent, all unhappiness. St. John vii. 17. It will take us out of ourselves, and make us one spirit with Christ the Lord. I Cor. vi. 17. It will make our worship pure, warmer, brighter, and more spiritual. It will be to us the assurance of eternal life. For He that does the Will of God abideth for ever. I St. John ii. 17.

113. Our daily Bread. St. Matt. vi. 11.

OW that we have prayed for the glory of God, we may go on to ask for ourselves. But how is it that we do not begin with

the wants of our soul? In the natural order of prayer confession of sin, and the cry for forgiveness, would come first.

The Lord would teach us the true principle of prayer; that is, dependence upon God for everything, for the very life itself. Confessing Him to be the Giver of all good gifts, we throw ourselves on His Divine Love and Providence, and ask Him give us the necessaries of life, food and raiment. r, while poverty is a blessed state, extreme want a snare. Many a deed of violence has been mmitted, many a good character been sinned ay, many a loving heart grown cold, in the art of daily bread. The safest rank in life is at in which God daily feeds His people with food nvenient for them. Prov. xxx. 8-9.

Give us, we pray. For without His gift all our bour is in vain; without His blessing the bread, nen won, would fail to nourish. Deut. viii. 3. se how this petition cuts down all proud trust in it own wisdom and strength. See how it consmits all foolish trust in lucky days, all superstitus fancies. Our Father, give Thou. And work ust follow prayer. Therefore we are pledging irselves to labour, while we ask His blessing. or He has said by His Apostle, If any man will at work neither shall he eat. 2 Thess. iii. 10.

To us. Not to me alone. So all selfishness is uit out. Asking for ourselves we ask for our other. Herein also we must do our prayers, as embers of one family giving to our brother when a see that he hath need.

Our daily bread—day by day. Bread, that which necessary, not that which ministers to the lust the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of it; enough for each day as it comes, not for the eedy laying up of treasure upon earth. His bless-

ing is to be sought on modest, contented labor not on idleness, luxury, pomp, and covetousness.

Our petition does not stop here. We pray if the soul as well as for the body. There is a family of the soul, Amos viii. II-I3, the cause of weakness disease, and death among the heathen, among or own countrymen in distant lands, among some cour brethren in England even. The Bread of the soul is the Word of God, rightly divided to the Lord's servants by the stewards of His Church St. Luke xii. 42. The Bread of God is the Eterma Word Himself, His Flesh, which He gave for the life of the world upon the Cross, which He has led with His Church that we may eat, and live so ever. St. John vi. 32-58.

Therefore, we pray here that the doctrine of Christ may be faithfully taught, that the Holy Sacrament may be duly administered, as the daily bread of the children of God. And we must labour as well as pray for this Bread also. We must hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly diges the Bread given in holy instruction. We must pre pare ourselves in penitence and charity for the Bread given from the Lord's Table, and feed upon Him in faith with thanksgiving. For only so have we the right to expect this Bread. Only so have the right to expect the strengthening and refreshing of our souls.

Lord, evermore give us this Bread. Lord, make It to be to us the Food of Immortal Life.

14. Forgive us our debts. S. Matt. vi. 12-14-15.



PRAYER, as much wanted for the soul, as the last was wanted for the body! A prayer which rises at once to our lips as we think

if the awful majesty of God, of all that He has lone for us, of all that we owe to Him!

Brethren, we are debtors. All that we have, all that we are, is God's gift. He had given the world many excellent gifts. Last of all He sent His Son, and poured out His Holy Spirit. Free gifts; for we had not deserved them. Yet so given, that we should be answerable to God for them, and to return Him Hisown with usury. St. Luke xix. 23. How have we repaid Him? We have failed, miserably. We have paid nothing. Our debt to Him is like the ten thousand talents. St. Matt. xviii. 24. We cannot even give Him back what He entrusted to we use. We can only cry, "Forgive us our debts."

Think how often we sin by negligence and ignorance, how often we sin wilfully and presumptubusly. Thought, word, and deed, all serve as occations for sin, all increase the debt. The little that we may have done to His glory is no merit to us. It was not done of our own will, or by our own strength. It is the fruit of His constant striving, His preventing, supporting, prevailing grace. We are, at the best, but unprofitable servants.

So the proud are made to acknowledge their unworthiness before God. The careless are taught Repentance, confession, amendment, the the three great conditions of forgiveness, with in the Blood of the Cross.

There is one more condition attached, pe we should say, one part of amendment espept as a duty—as we forgive our debtors. Lord had already spoken of this. He speak again as soon as he has ended the prayer. V asking that God will deal out to us the measure of forgiveness that we deal out to brother. Then what if we have failed in Ch love and pity? What if we require from our bour payment to the uttermost farthing? own prayers condemn us, and seal our connation.

See how the Lord's prayer teaches us d while it helps us to pray. Man's proud heart

ty this debt of active loving service. Pity shall brain pity. Ch. v. 7. Love shall win love. Ind if we are longing for any assurance that ur Father has forgiven us our debts, we shall arely find it in the warmer affection and readier ity with which we are kind one to another, ender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, or Christ's sake, has forgiven us. Eph. iv. 32.

15. Lead us not into temptation. St. Matt. vi. 13.

S the last petition bears upon the past, so this bears upon the future. Man's life on earth is a continual strife. The baptized

re pledged to fight manfully against the world, he flesh, and the devil; and this battle will never me ended until our spirit has returned unto God who gave it. It would be hard enough to resist even one of these enemies. It is an awful thing to have to resist them all; to be exposed to their attacks every moment of our lives; to know that none can be saved but those who endure to the md.

The words "tempt" and "temptation" are used in Scripture in different senses. Sometimes "to mempt" means to try and prove the faith, as when God did tempt Abraham. Gen. xxii. I. Sometimes it means to persuade to sin. Heb. iv. 15. Sometimes to provoke to anger. Ps. xcv. 9.

Now we do not ask God to keep us from all emptation of the first kind. Because it is only

us the needful grace and strength to overce

Does God then ever lead His people int ation? St. James plainly tells us, no. He had found men excusing themselves sins by saying that they had been tempted and that therefore they could not help God tempts no man. It is a man's own lu leads him into sin. And St. Paul writes the will not suffer us to be tempted above that able, but will with the temptation make escape, that we may be able to bear it.

13. Therefore we must not look on our F Heaven as the author of evil.

He has given us many weapons for temptation—prayer and watchfulness, His or mortification of the flesh, remembrance love on the Cross, meditation on Death ar f wicked persons; for one sinner destroyeth much vod. Eccles, ix. 18. We must not listen to icked conversation, or read wicked books, or look unholy objects: for temptation comes through e ears, and the eyes. How can we pray Him lead us not into temptation, while we are running to it? God helps those who help themselves. we keep ourselves, I St. John v. 18, He will ep us with His power that the wicked one touch not. Temptation will come; that we must But if we throw ourselves on His help pect. d use the armour of righteousness which He has ren us, temptation will be a blessing instead of a Every temptation resisted will give us furer strength here, and add a brighter glory to our own of life. St. James i. 12. For every temptan will be a victory.

116. Deliver us from Evil. St. Matt. vi. 13.

HIS final petition of the Lord's prayer sounds at first like a repetition of the two which have gone before. God's wrath is evil; erefore we prayed for forgiveness. Temptation evil; therefore we prayed not to be led into it. It we shall find here deeper meanings still. First, we have in this the completion of the two evious petitions. We may have been forgiven; a may be spared temptation. Yet something is ill wanting. And that is deliverance from the it is of little use that an offender is excused.

from punishment so long as he is tied and bound by the chain of his sins, so long as the old bad habit drags him down again into the mire. We must be set free from the power of sin, as well as cleansed from its stain. The Blood of Jesus cleanses us. The Life of Jesus delivers us. And the Holy Communion is both the strengthening of our souls and the sealing of our forgiveness.

The evil! Is not the world very full of evil? The heathen cried to be delivered, crushed under the evil, though they knew not what, or whence, it was. We Christians know, thank God. Evil comes from sin, is sin; and the evil one is the devil. We know, too, where we may flee for refuge, even to Him who overcame the evil one, to Him who prayed to the Father for His disciples that He would keep them from the evil. St. John xvii. 15. Therefore, whether we suffer under trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity, we may sum up our wants in these words—Deliver us from evil. His power can turn that which we dread as evil into good, and make even temptation to be victory.

But especially is this a prayer for deliverance from the evil one himself, that is, the devil. He is that wicked one, who as the tempter, the adversary, the liar, and murderer, and destroyer, has brought evil into God's good world, who brings evil upon the people of God, in his wrath and fury. Jobi II. Most especially will he try to bring evil upon them when their Father in Heaven has blessed them with

d sacramental union. He will rage against that all, that he may lead it into denial of its Saviour. Luke xxii. 31. He will bring upon it the evil of odily suffering, should God so permit. And the marer we are to God, of course the greater his wrath.

Therefore we pray to be delivered from him; from his power against us in this evil world; from his traitorous ally within us, in our own evil will; from himself and all the powers of his evil spirits. * It is not safe for us to speak of every trouble as evil, and ask to be delivered from it. Much that we should call evil. our Father knows to be good. Much that we think good, He knows to be evil. But in these few simple words we cannot go wrong, er offend against His wise Love. Health and sickness, riches and poverty, fellowship and loneliness, joy and sorrow, who can tell whether of these are good or bad for us? He knows best. Safer for us to pray, not so much that He will give or remove these, as, "From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from Thy wrath and everlasting damnation, Good Lord, deliver us."

117. The Doxology. St. Matt. vi. 13.



ELIVER us from evil is the first cry of the sin-laden heart. It is no less the cry of the soul safely sheltered in its Saviour's

arms. For unless He continue to deliven, man's weakness must fail. And this prayer offered and answered, what now remains to be prayed for but the eternal reward? Faith now reaches for ward to the sight and possession of those things for which we asked as we began to pray. That Kingdom is His, that Will shall be done, that Name shall be hallowed; for He is King Supreme, All-powerful, All Holy. And as we began with One Father, confessing the Oneness of the God whom we worship, so here we acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, Col. i. 13; the power of the Holy Spirit, Rom. xv. 13, 19; and the glory of the Father, St. Matt. xvi. 27.

The doxology teaches us the same lesson as the first petition. We may not rush thoughtlessly into that awful presence to pour out hasty requests. We must begin with remembering the holiness of His Name. Neither may we, after praying, past hurriedly away to our work or our pleasure. We must end with the same thoughts. He to whom we began to pray, He to whom we have offered our prayers, is King, All Mighty, and All Holy. Before thou risest from thy knees, O Christian, remember that thou hast been in the presence of God. Linger yet awhile, giving thanks unto Him for His great glory. Especially leave not His House until Thou hast given thanks for His permitting thee to approach Him, and to call Him. Father and Lord.

The doxology stands to the Lord's Prayer much the Gloria Patri stands to the Psalms. We end with our minds full of the greatness of Him with from we have to do. We cannot doubt that our havers are heard, and will be answered to our wod; that, in the end, the powers of evil must rield before the power of God. We need to be eminded of this sometimes. The faint-hearted see he sin and sorrow around them, and they give up he struggle. It seems useless to fight when the attle is going against them everywhere. The ngodly find that the devil's service brings a present ain; and they live as if God had no power to unish or to reward. Worldly men live as if this orld were the reality, as if the eternal weight of lary promised were but a shadow. See how the oxology rebukes them all. The Kingdom is the ord's. He shall put all enemies under His feet. he Power is His, to punish eternally and to reward. he Glory is His too, when the world shall pass way and the glory of it, and they only who do the ill of God shall endure for ever.

This dexology is not given by St. Luke. It is ometimes left out in our Church service. Why?

Because we are not in tune for praise in every art of our service. We pray the Lord's prayer, the rest time as penitent and forgiven sinners, in thanksiving, and we pass at once to the praise of the 'salms. Later on in the service, after the Creed, in the Licany, and at the beginning of the Communion.

service, we are entreating for mercy, asking in necessary benefits. But in the end of the Conmunion service we add the doxology. With god as reason. For then we have shewn forth before Or all Father the Sacrifice of the Death of His dear Son We have been partakers of Christ. We are with Christ and Christ with us. Then, if every after the doing of the Eucharist or Sacrifice thanksgiving, we have the right to offer the works Eucharist, the Sacrifice of praise, by Him whose we have received. Heb. xiii. 15. Thine, O Lot God, Heavenly Father, is the Kingdom, the Powe, and the Glory. We take up the song of the Old Covenant, I Chron. xxix. II, and carry it on, look ing for the day, when before the Lamb that we k slain, we may sing it with the angels, and elders k and the ten thousands of the redeemed. Rev. v. 8-14

118. Fasting. St. Matt. vi. 16-18.



ASTING is the last of the three great divisions of the Christian's service, the "sober life," which consists in keeping our bodies

in temperance, soberness, and chastity. Gal. v. 24.

Fasting, strictly speaking, means going without food altogether for the whole day, and at night taking only a little, and that common, food. In a less strict sense, it means abstinence from fleshmeat and wine, and the taking very little or no food for the first hours of the day.

Among the Jews there were regular public fasts,

eat day of Atonement, for instance, Lev. xvi. is well as private fasts. Of course what our 1 Lord says here about secrecy does not to the former. In the public fasts, as in pubship, we must let our light shine before men. tly vet boldly. So Christians must not be ed of keeping Lent, and other fasts of the 1. The private fasts were left very much to a own conscience. Some of the Pharisees twice in the week, St. Luke xviii, 12, on the and fourth day. Our Lord fasted Himself, pected that His disciples would fast. If He ot say, "Remember to fast," it is because He it for granted that they will do so. He it as much a part of their life as prayer and ving. He gives them plain directions how He assures them of their Heavenly 's blessing upon it. He tells them that ceris can never be overcome but by prayer and St. Mark ix. 29. k again at the many examples of fasting is in the Bible. Public fasts are mentioned ially, private fasts hardly less often. They

is in the Bible. Public fasts are mentioned ially, private fasts hardly less often. They eak with Jesus on the Mount of the Transion are Moses and Elias; they, like Him, for the space of forty days. David and, Anna and Cornelius, Peter and Paul, were ing themselves in fastings often. 2 Cor. vi. 27. The early writings of the Church tell urefully the devout Christians kept their

bodies in subjection by fasting. Strange the Christians of our day should neglect this duty a they do! And yet not strange. For the fled lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. Gal. v. 17.

But there may be a mortifying of the body, and at the same time a puffing up of the fleshly mind Col. ii. 18. Therefore our Lord gives this cautil The private fast must be for God's eye not man It must be an afflicting of the soul in sorrow for past sin: a mortification of the flesh in order overcome its sinful lusts; a help to prayer and watchfulness for the loosening the devil's hold upon us, and the lifting up of our spirits in communic with God. Not least, it must be a taking up the Cross in order that we may be made in ever so small a degree partakers of the sufferings of Jesus The fast of the Pharisees was too much what God condemns in Isaiah lviii. 3-5. That is no acceptable fast which gives up only a little pleasant food and drink. We must fast from sin.

This spirit of self-denial should not be confined to the days and seasons of appointed fasting. It must rule our lives if we are ever to subdue the flesh. I Cor. ix. 27. Perpetual temperance is what we are bound to by our Baptismal vows. But the stricter self-denial of fasting is binding upon us at the proper seasons. And also, when we go to receive the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, we should honour Him by letting. This be the first food of the day. The Jews lasts.

my hours before their Passover. May not we ristians pay the same reverence to Christ our ssover, to the Flesh and Blood of the Lamb of ad.

119. The divided mind. St. Matt. vi. 19-34.

HESE duties, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, are to be done not for worldly praise or gain, but in faith of the heavenly reward.

he whole life is to be ruled by the same faith. he disciple's treasure is to be in Heaven. His art will be there also. His eye will look to God one for guidance, for sustenance, for reward. The agle eye, intent upon one thing, will find the that path and attain to the right end. The evil e, looking every way, is little better than the ind eye. It is bewildered and undecided. It ll try to serve two masters. And it will fail iserably.

Moreover this thought, this anxious care—for that the meaning of the word "thought" here,—this ubtfulness of care, is a denial of the Father's re and power. Your mind has no rest in your re for meat and drink and clothing. Can you t trust Him who has given you that precious ssession of life to provide those lesser gifts? ook out of yourself upon the lowest things of is creation, and let them teach you. He feeds e birds, without any toil on their part. Will He t feed you? With all your thought you cannot

add one inch to your height. He clothes the w side flowers in a glory which the proudest of ki imitate in vain. Will He not much more ck you? This taking thought is a want of fi Leave it to the Gentiles, to the heathen and it rant who know no better. The servant of must have a single eye. He must seek first kingdom of God and His Righteousness. will give to His faithful servants all necessary th What is the testimony of the Saints? I have young and now am old. And yet saw I never righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their b Ps. xxxvii. 25; I Tim. iv. 8.

Yes, this is the Christian's life. His eye is si looking unto Jesus. Ps. cxxiii. 1-2; Heb. x He will guide his life by these four rules:

My law in everything—the will of God.

My motive in everything—the love of God.

My object in everything—the glory of God

My strength in everything—the grace of G

With these his course is clear. He will not
away. He will not even look very far for
His prayer is—Give us this day our daily bread
fretful thought for luxury or show. No an
fears for the future. He is content for to
trustful for to-morrow. If evil—what the
calls evil—is to come, he will not make the b
heavier by vexing his soul with it before
God who sends the trouble will give the str
to support it.

Do not, however, mistake our Lord's meaning. is fretful, covetous anxiety, which He forbids: : foresight, and prudence, and the laving up for age. We have no right through idleness, or travagance, to throw ourselves upon others as on as we are past working for ourselves. That is faith in God which neglects His command to your. That is no Christian contentment which kes itself a burden to others.

120 Judging others. St. Matt. vii. I.



RIGHT judgment in all things is one of the best gifts of God's Holy Spirit. But even the best gifts are misused. God's

ly Word is used sometimes as the lamp not so ch to guide our own feet as to expose our brother's ings. If we cannot rise by our own merits we cy we can do so by his faults. We can show our cernment between good and evil, our tenderness of science at the sight of sin, our anxiety for God's ry and our brother's salvation. And it costs us hing. The word of blame is so easily spoken! d the world will then give us credit for loving l doing what is good.

There is no way of gaining credit half so easy this. Words will go a long way in place of ions. With men, that is. Not with the Father ch seeth in secret. Our very sin, our self-satistion and pride, leads us on, deeper and deeper. are all eyes for our brother's faults. We spy

out the speck in his conduct. Yet we ce the beam in our own. So keen-sighter And yet so blind! Our own soul is goi while we are busy with our brother's little

This judging is a grievous sine against pitifulness, and forgiveness, and humility It cannot fail to injure our own spiritual can we work out our own salvation with trembling, while we are boasting that much better than others? Most of al offence against Christ, His clear piercing rule and governance. He seeth, and wei knoweth all things. I St. John iii. 20. H the power and frequency of temptation, bestowed, the watchfulness and resist struggles and the victories as well as tl We see the one fall perhaps, where He has many triumphs. He approves where we His throne of judgment on the earth is v Him. And we, as it were, run up the seat ourselves in His place, and summon o and pass sentence. Woe unto us! for we ding into the office of the Lord. Woe unt in that thou judgest another, thou conden self. Rom. xiv. 3-4-10. These hasty blame shall make the measure of thine c ment. Begin with thine own life. The will make the clear conscience. Then, by then, cast a stone at thy brother.

At the same time do not confuse truth

and sin. Charity does not require you to enemies of your Lord as if they were lisciples. There is a discipline which the must exercise. There is a caution in the conversation. With the unbeliever and ne speak not of His holiest mysteries, of ious dealings with your soul. They will your words, and you.

again, the golden mean is to be sought, ugh it is to find. Judge not, lest you gainst Christian charity and humility. ak not everywhere of secret and holiest s, lest the word and work of Christ, lest imself, be put to scorn and shame.

edience the companion of prayer. St. Matt. vii. 7-14.

AYER is the making our wants known into God. It is impossible to imagine any one living altogether without prayer unless utter unbeliever. Even then he must have n, hopeless heart indeed, if he does not at der the burden of sorrow or pain, cry out higher power to help him. We want: we pray.

- this natural spirit of prayer God has command to pray. He has provided us, ar Son, with a pattern and a form of prayer.
- re simpler and plainer words spoken than

these. Ask and it shall be given you. In fact the picture put before our eyes is that of the Lord waiting that He may be gracious. Is. xxx. 18. He has already prepared for us the good things which we need. Prov. ix. 1-5. They are in His hand. At our word He openeth His hand and filleth us with plenteousness. Ps. cxlv. 16. He has placed blessings in our way. We have only to seek, and we have found. He stands, the Porter at the Gate of Heaven. We knock, and the Gate is opened immediately. Wonderful—is it not?—that when He is so quick to give, we should be so slow to pray; that we should ask so seldom, so coldy, and for so little.

It is because we judge Him by ourselves. He asks for our heart. We cannot give it. He seeks us. We hear His voice, and are afraid, and hide ourselves. He stands at the door and knocks. Rev. iii. 10. We will not open.

Again, the Lord Jesus appeals to the noblest affections of the human heart. When a child asks food from his father, the father will never mock him with a stone, or frighten him with a serpent Evil, grudging, as we are, the parent's love for the child is tender, and generous, and careful. Judge of God accordingly. He is the Father, of whom the whole family, and all family relationship and love, in Heaven and earth is named. Eph. iii. 15. Will He not much more give good gifts to His children, when they ask in His Son's Name, as

ling to His will? He who spared not His own for us, will He not with Him freely give us all gs? Rom. viii. 32.

our Lord mentions the bread and the fish; com-1 food with those who dwelt by the Sea of ilee. With bread and fishes he feeds the five usand, and again the four thousand. St. Matt. 17: xv. 34. Jesus taketh bread, and giveth to disciples, and fish likewise, St. John xxi. 13. ead, daily bread, we are bidden to ask for. Our ther giveth us the true Bread from Heaven, more h Angel's food, Ps. lxxviii, 25-26. And what that but the Flesh of the Son of Man? St. John 32-33. And what, again, is the fish, but that ne bread again, the Flesh of Him whose Name d titles in their first letters in the Greek—Jesus rist, Son of God, Saviour—form the word for h: and of whom the fish is so often in Church naments a sign and emblem. So do earthly its represent Heavenly. So do Heavenly gifts icel earthly.

But prayer, to avail with God, must have life. I must be effectual, fervent, instant prayer. It isst spring from a heart pitiful, loving, just and issuedient. It must be accompanied by earnest bedience. The way of obedient love is the fulling of the law and the prophets. And that way hard to find.

But of the strait gate and the narrow way our ord speaks more fully in St. Luke xiii. 23-30.

122. Profession without practice. St. Matt. vil. 13-29; St. Luke vii. 46-49.

HE strait gate is hard of entrance. Indeed it is not always easy to find. Wherever the Lord has in His mercy placed the

truth, there Satan's malice has sent the lie. Guids we all want; for how shall we understand the way of salvation and the word of truth except some man should guide us? Acts viii. 31. And if the guides prove blind or false, how shall we wak aright? False prophets, false Christs, false Aportles, false teachers, have been from the first the bane of the Church, and the ruin of the flock. They are far more dangerous than open enemics. How may we distinguish them?

One rule is—By their fruits. Mark the fruit of their teaching. Their smooth words, preaching peace where there is no peace, their making Christian liberty a cloak for selfish and fleshly indulgence, I St. Peter ii. 16, their boasting of full assurance while they break the very plainest laws of Christian holiness, will prove them to be no teachers sent from God. If the fruit be evil the tree cannot be good, cannot be the planting of the Heavenly Father. St. Matt. xv. 13.

"Lord, Lord," is easy to cry. To do God's will is harder. The words of prayer are soon uttered. But if the life do not agree with the prayer, the blessing is not won; for God has been mocked.

Yes, and even greater things than words of prayer may be ours, and yet we may not be Christ's. Prophecy, and the casting out of devils, and other mighty miracles, may have been ours, wifts from Him. Yet they may have been only wifts, not graces; blessings for others, in no way mitting us to Him. The preacher to others may be a castaway. I Cor. ix. 27. Balaam prophesied. Judas cast out devils. And what was their end?

Words without acts, profession without obedience, with without works, these are trees without fruit, buildings without foundation. The branch that is in Him beareth good fruit and much. The house that is built upon Him is as part of the rock, and shall stand in the vehement waterflood. The soul which is one with Christ, and in Christ, has Christ's life within, Christ's eternal strength sustaining it. But, remember, His grace is given that we should do our part—the digging deep through all false hopes and fancies, the clearing away of all trust in ourselves, the reaching to Christ Himself, the careful building stone upon stone, making each part sure and binding; the solid structure more our care than showy ornament; the work done at last as work, for the Master Builder's eye. Such a building shall stand. But are there many such? Are we ourselves building after this manner, on the Rock, in faith and obedience? For all else is vain.

The people were astonished at His doctrine. He taught with authority, as one greater than Moses

and those of old time. St. Matt. v. 21, 27, 33. Far more than this even. He speaks of His own Divine Power, of His office as Judge of the world. He will be called "Lord, Lord," by men on earth. He shall be called "Lord, Lord," at that awful day. It shall be His to pronounce the soul's eternal happiness and misery. What wonder, then, that the people were astonished at His doctrine?

123 The Draught of Fishes. St. Luke v. 1-11

HE Sermon on the Mount is ended, and Jesus is again by the Sea of Galilee. Two fishing vessels are anchored off the shore.

The fishermen's work is done, and they are cleansing their nets. What more convenient than to make use of one of these boats as His chair of teaching? Sitting there, at a little distance from the land, He can easily make Himself heard by His eager audience. It is Simon Peter's boat which He has chosen, and which after this He so frequently used in crossing the Lake. The teaching ended, He bade Simon launch out into the deep, and cast his net.

Simon, wearied with the night of fruitless toil, receives the command with faith, and pays a glad obedience. As if he would say, "Though without Thee we have laboured in vain, Thy word is enough. For that will give success." Ps. cxvii. I. The word of Jesus was enough. The net was filled, and began to break. Their partners came with the other

at, and that too was filled so as to be in danger sinking.

Here is proof of Christ's Almighty power over e living creatures of His Hand. He who had ought the locusts over the land of Egypt, and e quails to His people in the wilderness, now ings the fishes to the net of the disciples. Work ithout Christ may fail. Work at His command ust be blessed. Therefore part of our daily orning prayer must always be that Christ's bless-g may follow our toil. Therefore, also, we who ust in His word, must launch out into the deep, id let down our net. He does not give the inease except to those who work.

A miracle it was. Yet who does not understand deep spiritual lesson, sealed by the Lord's words, enceforth thou shalt catch men? The boat is the hurch; the fishers, the Apostles and Preachers, unching forth into the deep at His word; casting e net, St. Mark xvi. 20; St. Matt. xiii. 47, and thering of every kind; gathering so many that e net of discipline is breaking by dissensions and Ise doctrine; that the ship is even sinking, but at Jesus is with us, and by His presence the hurch shall be brought safely to the eternal shore. The miracle—perhaps because it had to do with s own employment—carried to Peter's heart a eeper conviction of the Lord's Power than he ad felt before. He realises the awful majesty and ight of the great Doer. The sight of God filled.

Job with self-abhorrence. Job xlii. 5-6. So with Peter. At Jesus' knees he entreats Him to depart from a sinful man. Yet we are sure that he did not desire to be taken at his word. So do we feel when the glory of God shews us our own littleness and We are afraid. God is too great, too sinfulness. good for us. Yet we cannot part with Him, though His Presence slavs us. So it is with the devot mind often, especially at the Holy Communion Therefore they are right who fear, as they draw mear. But they are wrong, who, in their fear, draw back again. Fall at His knees, and hold Him He will bid thee "Fear not." He will keep thee with Him.

Now they are to become fishers of men indeed. And they forsake all, and follow Him.

124 The leper cleansed. St. Luke v. 12-19.



HEREVER there was need, the Lord shewed Himself Mighty in giving; where ever sorrow, He was the Comforter; where

ever sickness, the good Physician. Few diseases were more terrible than leprosy. It was a living death. From one little spot it spread over the whole body, destroying first the skin, then the limbs, until they rotted and fell away one after another. No cure for it was known. If the leper was ever cleansed, which occurred but seldom, it was through the special mercy of God. 2 Kings v. 7. Though alive, the leper was as one dead.

· Leprosy therefore was the subject of special laws. Though it was not what we call catching—except that the child might inherit it from the parent—the leper was required to live apart, and by his peculiar dress, and the frequent cry of "Unclean," to warn the traveller not to approach him. Lev. xiii. 14. Leprosy was to the Jew the type of sin, that terrible disease of the soul which passes on from parent to child: which shows itself first in some little spot. and soon reveals the corruption of the inward tature by spreading over the whole soul, until the sinner becomes dead while he liveth. The Blood of Christ alone can take away sin. The Life of Christ alone can restore the corrupt nature. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Otherwise he is still held by the leprosy of sin. He may try to cure himself and his fellow lepers by the best lessons of earthly wisdom, by the highest examples fourity, and honour, and truth, and charity. All in vain. The plague is within; in the heart.

Therefore the Son of God came, taking our nature upon Him. Thus He touches us all. Therefore He gives to each one to partake of His Divine Nature, 2 St. Peter i. 4, by being planted into Him, Rom. vi. 3-5, and drawing new life from Him, as the branch draws life from the Vine. Our union with Christ is effected by one Sacrament, continued in the other. In Baptism we are made members of Christ. By the Communion of His Body and Blood we are one with Christ and Christ with us.

The leper, full of leprosy, came beseeching J for cleansing. Not for healing, as if it we common disease, but cleansing. He has fait the Lord's power, great faith. If God alone cleanse leprosy, Jesus must have come from the is not sure of His will. But the Lord not leave Him in doubt. Jesus does what kindest and noblest of the Jesus would never lared to do—put forth His hand and touchim; I will. The touch, the word, are the to and word of God, of Him who cannot be dered unclean. Cleansing and life pass if the hand of Jesus into the leper. He is clear immediately; renewed, as a little child. 2 K v. 14.

Cleansed, and by Christ. Yet not on this count free from the obligations of the law of Mo All must be fulfilled. He must shew himself to priest, must offer the appointed gifts. Oh, that Lord would so cleanse and renew us! We must fear. Only believe. He is ready to do He does so. For He is in His Church, with ministers. To them He has committed the mini of reconciliation, the word of cleansing. He, Great Physician, speaks by them, touches us, lets us hear Him and touch Him, by their ministers us hear Him and touch Him, by their ministers us hear Him and touch Him, by their ministers as this leper. We must seek Christ, Him alone, for the cure of our soul. And we naccept the cleansing according to His word.

125. The palsied man healed. St. Mark ii. 1-12; St. Luke v. 17-26.

GAIN Jesus is in Capernaum, sitting among the doctors. As a teacher now, not as a learner. They have come from every city,

drawn by the report of His miracles.

He is in the house; probably St. Peter's. Crowds throng into the room, and around the door. It poor creature, sick of the palsy, is brought by our of his friends, in the hope that Jesus may heal tim. But there is not room for even one man to hass in, much less four with their burden. They are not to be daunted however. To see Jesus they are come, and see Him they will. He is probably in the large upper chamber, which extended in almost all Jewish houses over the smaller rooms beneath. They mount by the outer steps, remove the tiling, and let the sick man down before the tery feet of the Healer. There would be no great difficulty in this in the low, flat houses of Palestine.

It was a strange intrusion. But He whose Name I Love never resents such interruptions. His leart is ever open to the cry of sorrow. "Always p pray," that is His command. And in these piracles He shews how ready He is to hear and answer prayer, at all times.

The poor man lies on his bed, helpless and them. Perhaps he is frightened by the many yondering eyes turned upon him, the hard, proud

122. Profession without practice. St. Matt. vii. 13-29; St. Luke vii. 46-49.

HE strait gate is hard of entrance. Indeed it is not always easy to *find*. Wherever the Lord has in His mercy placed the

truth, there Satan's malice has sent the lie. Guides we all want; for how shall we understand the way of salvation and the word of truth except some man should guide us? Acts viii. 31. And if these guides prove blind or false, how shall we walk aright? False prophets, false Christs, false Apostles, false teachers, have been from the first the bane of the Church, and the ruin of the flock. They are far more dangerous than open enemies. How may we distinguish them?

One rule is—By their fruits. Mark the fruit of their teaching. Their smooth words, preaching peace where there is no peace, their making Christian liberty a cloak for selfish and fleshly indulgence, I St. Peter ii. 16, their boasting of full assurance while they break the very plainest laws of Christian holiness, will prove them to be no teachers sent from God. If the fruit be evil the tree cannot be good, cannot be the planting of the Heavenly Father. St. Matt. xv. 13.

"Lord, Lord," is easy to cry. To do God's will is harder. The words of prayer are soon uttered. But if the life do not agree with the prayer, the blessing is not won; for God has been mocked.

ney have spoken truth indeed, a greater truth an they can understand, or acknowledge. To od alone it appertaineth to forgive sins. Yet He Is His ways and instruments of forgiveness. And tat they may see proof that this power is comsitted to Him, He now bids the sick man take up is bed and walk. And it was so. That moment, efore them all, he took up his bed, and departed, lorifying God. The multitude joined in his psalm of praise. The Scribes and Pharisees were already aving up materials for His ruin.

126 The Son of Man. St. Mark ii. 10.



NEW title of the Lord Jesus Christ, found in the Old Testament, and used in the Holy Gospels some forty times, only by

Himself, and of Himself! Twice after His ascenion He is spoken of under this title—by St. Stephen. Acts vii. 56, and by St. John, Rev. i. 13. In these instances the sight of the Glory and Power which surround the human nature of the man Christ Iesus lifts the speaker above his ordinary language.

But why this peculiar use of the title? Why this title at all? Was He not indeed a son of man, born of Mary, of her substance? The Jews. might have doubted whether He were the Son of God. We can understand their religious prejudices being offended by His claiming that title. St. John v. 18; St. Luke xxi. 70. But they could see that He was a son of man.

and those of old time. St. Matt. v. 21, 27, 33. Far more than this even. He speaks of His own Divine Power, of His office as Judge of the world. He will be called "Lord, Lord," by men on earth. He shall be called "Lord, Lord," at that awful day, It shall be His to pronounce the soul's eternal happiness and misery. What wonder, then, that the people were astonished at His doctrine?

123 The Draught of Fishes. St. Luke v. 1-11

HE Sermon on the Mount is ended, and Jesus is again by the Sea of Galilee. Two fishing vessels are anchored off the shore.

The fishermen's work is done, and they are cleaning their nets. What more convenient than to make use of one of these boats as His chair of teaching? Sitting there, at a little distance from the land, He can easily make Himself heard by His eager audience. It is Simon Peter's boat which He has chosen, and which after this He so frequently used in crossing the Lake. The teaching ended, He bade Simon launch out into the deep, and cast his net.

Simon, wearied with the night of fruitless toil, receives the command with faith, and pays a glad obedience. As if he would say, "Though without Thee we have laboured in vain, Thy word is enough. For that will give success." Ps. cxvii. I. The word of Jesus was enough. The net was filled, and began to break. Their partners came with the other

nd that too was filled so as to be in danger ing.

e is proof of Christ's Almighty power over ing creatures of His Hand. He who had it the locusts over the land of Egypt, and ails to His people in the wilderness, now the fishes to the net of the disciples. Work t Christ may fail. Work at His command be blessed. Therefore part of our daily ig prayer must always be that Christ's blessy follow our toil. Therefore, also, we who in His word, must launch out into the deep, down our net. He does not give the inexcept to those who work.

iracle it was. Yet who does not understand p spiritual lesson, sealed by the Lord's words. forth thou shalt catch men? The boat is the 1; the fishers, the Apostles and Preachers, ing forth into the deep at His word; casting t, St. Mark xvi. 20; St. Matt. xiii. 47, and ing of every kind; gathering so many that t of discipline is breaking by dissensions and octrine; that the ship is even sinking, but esus is with us, and by His presence the 1 shall be brought safely to the eternal shore. miracle—perhaps because it had to do with n employment—carried to Peter's heart a conviction of the Lord's Power than he It before. He realises the awful majesty and of the great Doer. The sight of God filled. Job with self-abhorrence. Job xlii. 5-6. So with Peter. At Jesus' knees he entreats Him to depart from a sinful man. Yet we are sure that he did not desire to be taken at his word. So do we feel when bury the glory of God shews us our own littleness and We are afraid. God is too great, too sinfulness. good for us. Yet we cannot part with Him, though His Presence slavs us. So it is with the devot mind often, especially at the Holy Communical Therefore they are right who fear, as they draw But they are wrong, who, in their fear, draw Fall at His knees, and hold Him back again. He will bid thee "Fear not." He will keep the with Him.

Now they are to become fishers of men indeed. And they forsake all, and follow Him.

124 The leper cleansed. St. Luke v. 12-19.



HEREVER there was need, the Lord shewed Himself Mighty in giving; wherever sorrow, He was the Comforter; wher-

ever sickness, the good Physician. Few diseases were more terrible than leprosy. It was a living death. From one little spot it spread over the whole body, destroying first the skin, then the limbs, until they rotted and fell away one after another. No cure for it was known. If the leper was ever cleansed, which occurred but seldom, it was through the special mercy of God. 2 Kings v. 7. Though alive, the leper was as one dead.

y therefore was the subject of special laws. t was not what we call catching-except :hild might inherit it from the parent—the required to live apart, and by his peculiar I the frequent cry of "Unclean," to warn ller not to approach him. Lev. xiii. 14. was to the Jew the type of sin, that terrible the soul which passes on from parent to nich shows itself first in some little spot. reveals the corruption of the inward spreading over the whole soul, until the comes dead while he liveth. The Blood alone can take away sin. The Life of one can restore the corrupt nature. If any 2 Christ, he is a new creature. Otherwise. held by the leprosy of sin. He may try mself and his fellow lepers by the best earthly wisdom, by the highest examples and honour, and truth, and charity. All The plague is within; in the heart. ore the Son of God came, taking our na-Him. Thus He touches us all. Thereives to each one to partake of His Divine St. Peter i. 4, by being planted into Him, 3-5, and drawing new life from Him, as th draws life from the Vine. Our union ist is effected by one Sacrament, continued In Baptism we are made members By the Communion of His Body and are one with Christ and Christ with us. The leper, full of leprosy, came beseeching Jesus for cleansing. Not for healing, as if it were a common disease, but cleansing. He has faith the Lord's power, great faith. If God alone cleanse leprosy, Jesus must have come from God He is not sure of His will. But the Lord does not leave Him in doubt. Jesus does what the kindest and noblest of the Jesus does what the kindest and noblest of the Jesus would never have dared to do—put forth His hand and touched him; I will. The touch, the word, are the touch and word of God, of Him who cannot be readered unclean. Cleansing and life pass from the hand of Jesus into the leper. He is cleaned immediately; renewed, as a little child. 2 King v. 14.

Cleansed, and by Christ. Yet not on this account free from the obligations of the law of Moses All must be fulfilled. He must shew himself to the priest, must offer the appointed gifts. Oh, that the Lord would so cleanse and renew us! We need Only believe. He is ready to do so. not fear. He does so. For He is in His Church, with His ministers. To them He has committed the ministry of reconciliation, the word of cleansing. He, the Great Physician, speaks by them, touches us, and lets us hear Him and touch Him, by their ministry. But then we must have the same faith and obedience as this leper. We must seek Christ, and Him alone, for the cure of our soul. And we must accept the cleansing according to His word.

St. Luke v. 17-26.

GAIN Jesus is in Capernaum, sitting among the doctors. As a teacher now, not as a learner. They have come from every city,

wn by the report of His miracles.

He is in the house; probably St. Peter's. owds throng into the room, and around the door. poor creature, sick of the palsy, is brought by ir of his friends, in the hope that Jesus may heal n. But there is not room for even one man to ss in, much less four with their burden. They e not to be daunted however. To see Jesus they e come, and see Him they will. He is probably the large upper chamber, which extended in nost all Jewish houses over the smaller rooms neath. They mount by the outer steps, removee tiling, and let the sick man down before the ry feet of the Healer. There would be no great ficulty in this in the low, flat houses of Palestine. It was a strange intrusion. But He whose Name Love never resents such interruptions. His art is ever open to the cry of sorrow. "Always pray," that is His command. And in these iracles He shews how ready He is to hear and swer prayer, at all times.

The poor man lies on his bed, helpless and ent. Perhaps he is frightened by the many ordering eyes turned upon him, the hard, proud

Sen

God

fat

ric

looks of these Scribes and Pharisees. "Who is this," they seem to ask, "breaking in upon as a thief and a robber?" But there is one face already turned to him in compassion, the face of the Teacher. He understands what the need is He gives a greater blessing than they were hoping for; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven that

Again, in this miracle as in so many others, is faith which wins the blessing. In the case of the leper, it was his own faith. Here it is the faith of the bearers. But observe again, it is faith which worketh. Faith by itself would never have obtained the blessing, if it had kept the massilent at home. Faith must be up and doing. It must look for Jesus, come to Him, speak of its needs, shew them, and ask Him to bless.

It was as beholding their faith that Jesus spoke these words. He beheld too the secret thoughts of the sick man—his sadness of heart at the remembrance of sin. Wherefore He says, Son—a word of affection, seldom used by our blessed Lord—Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.

At Nazareth he had offended by His claim to preach deliverance to the captives. St. Luke iv. 18. He offends now at Capernaum still more. The Scribes watch Him with no friendly eyes, thinking, but not speaking out, evil thoughts. This man blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only? To Him their hearts lie open even as the heart of the sufferer. He rebukes them for their murmungs.

They have spoken truth indeed, a greater truth than they can understand, or acknowledge. To God alone it appertaineth to forgive sins. Yet He has His ways and instruments of forgiveness. And that they may see proof that this power is committed to Him, He now bids the sick man take up his bed and walk. And it was so. That moment, before them all, he took up his bed, and departed, clorifying God. The multitude joined in his psalm of praise. The Scribes and Pharisees were already laying up materials for His ruin.

126 The Son of Man. St. Mark ii. 10.



NEW title of the Lord Jesus Christ, found in the Old Testament, and used in the Holy Gospels some forty times, only by

Himself, and of Himself! Twice after His ascension He is spoken of under this title—by St. Stephen, Acts vii. 56, and by St. John, Rev. i. 13. In these instances the sight of the Glory and Power which surround the human nature of the man Christ Jesus lifts the speaker above his ordinary language.

But why this peculiar use of the title? Why this title at all? Was He not indeed a son of man, born of Mary, of her substance? The Jews might have doubted whether He were the Son of God. We can understand their religious prejudices being offended by His claiming that title. St. John v. 18; St. Luke xxi. 70. But they could see that He was a son of man.

Yes, truly He was a son of man. But this the means ten thousand times more than that. Find it is a title given to the Messiah, to Him who ston before the Ancient of Days, and received from Him the everlasting Kingdom. Daniel vii. It was so understood by the Jews. And Jesus, it applying it to Himself, was claiming to be the Christ, the King who should hereafter sit at the right Hand of Power, and come in the clouds of Heave

And, secondly, it is a title of His brotherhood with all mankind. It declares Jesus to be one with us, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, true man, able to be touched with the feeling of all our infirmities. Yet this same title, while it united Him with us, exalts Him infinitely far above us It shews Him to us not merely a man, but THE MAN, the pattern Man, the representative of the human family, the second Adam, our Head. He gathers us all into Himself, that as in Adam all have died, so in Him all may be made alive.

For our salvation was to be worked out by the recovery and restoration of mankind, by some new powers working from within. From within, yet not of our own strength, but by the introduction of a new force and life into the fallen nature. And this must be God's doing. Therefore the Son of God became Son of Man, and every child of man planted into Him is made a new creature, one with the second Adam, the life-giving Spirit.

The work of blessing and salvation is His, be-

He is the Son of Man. He did not work Ie does not work now, only by virtue of His Son of God. All power is given unto Him even and earth, because He is the Son of Therefore, with the paralytic, He does not sins only as God, by His Omnipotence, but 1 of Man, because He has united man's to His own, and in that nature has fulfilled iteousness, and so merited to receive all power h—in that nature. That power He has never ide. He forgives sins on earth, being ever prethe Church which is His Body, by means Word and Sacraments, and by the Ministry conciliation, 2 Cor. v. 18, and by whatever ains to what is called the power of the keys. itt. xvi. 19; St. John xx. 23.

unbelief of the scribes has lived on unto this Men ask, with the enemies of Jesus, "Who rgive sins but God only?" That is, they hat the Son of Man is present in His Church. see only a human ministry, and naturally eny its power. Happier are we, if we can in the spirit of the humble spectators, and God who has given such power unto men!

The call of Matthew. St. Luke v. 27.

HE publicans and harlots had eagerly flocked to the preaching of John the Baptist; they believed, they repented, they

! To these it was given to enter into the

Kingdom of Heaven before the more learned Scribes and Pharisees. St. Matt. xxi. 31-32. Now one of these same publicans is to be called to preach the coming of that Kingdom, to rule in it, to suffer for it; and when it shall have come, to sit with the twelve on the thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus, of the lowest, the Lord chooses whom He will to share His highest glory.

a

The Lord is still at Capernaum. Passing from the house where He had taught the multitude and healed the paralytic, He goes to the water-side, still to be busy teaching a fresh audience. The bosts are coming and going. The tax-gatherer is at his post, gathering the tolls from the traffickers; a mat well-to-do, his heart seemingly set upon gain, and careless of the contempt of his countrymen. Seemingly. But we would rather think of him as having heard John's preaching, as having heard and seen Jesus already. Not now for the first time awakened from sin unto righteousness, but long since doing his duty in the fear of the Lord. Jesus passes by. A look; a word; Follow thou me. The money, the books are left. Levi the publican, like Peter and John, left all, and arose and followed Him.

Taken up with the daily drudgery and care of receiving tolls in a despised profession, Levi looks little likely to be one of the Lord's chosen ones. But his trade, though despised, may be honest, and therefore honourable. Comfort for us; whatever our station in life, we may do all to the

y of God, and be known and prized by Him. we of Matthew's spirit, faithfully and dilitly doing our duty? Are we like him, ready eave all for Jesus' sake? Matthew was comatively a rich man, rich enough to make a feast Jesus some months afterwards. The Church of ist wants men to serve in her ministry at home l abroad. The harvest is plenteous, the labourare few. Who will forsake all for Christ's sake, I the Gospel's? The world pays better than the urch. Therefore the harvest of souls is negted, and men throng to the service of the world. ey cannot, when Jesus calls, rise and leave all Him. Parents turn their children's hearts away m the Altar to the counting house.

His was a greater sacrifice than that of the fishern. They had something to give up, but Matw more. He, as they, went readily, at once.
we we nothing to give up, as He calls us;
hing which is keeping our hearts from Him?
ich indeed. Not merely lawful pursuits and
asures. But sins. These we must give up witht waiting any further call. The others we must
ready to give up when He requires it. For only
can we be safe in our worldly employments.
t if we have Matthew's spirit that is enough.
ien our world is no snare to us. We are delivered
m the evil. We are only waiting for the Master
come and call for us. St. John xi. 20. Then
will rise, and go to Him immediately.

PART VI

THE SECOND YEAR.

128. The Pool of Bethesda. St. John v. 1-9.

T. JOHN tells us only that after them things was a feast of the Jews. This was probably the Passover, which thus marks riming of the second was a feast of the Lord

the beginning of the second year of the Lords ministry. In all things He was obedient to the whole law, and therefore now, as heretofore, He went up to the holy city to keep the feast.

Near the sheep-market—or, it may be, the sheep gate, Nehem. iii. I—was a pool, shut in by walls admittance being gained by five porches. This building was known as Beth-Esda, the House of Mercy. Rightly so, for many had found healing there. At a certain season an Angel disturbed the water, and whoever first stepped in was cured of his disease. No wonder therefore that the House of Mercy was thronged. Mercy once a year, and for one only, was so rare and precious a boon, that every sufferer would seek it.

Yet there is a more precious gift of healing given now; not once a year but always; not to one only but to all; the healing of the soul by the washing

the Blood of Christ. And where are the great ultitude of impotent folk who seek this? The ft is generously, freely given. And so it is reirded as nothing worth!

In this healing spring we have a type of the cred Font of Baptism. Water, of itself, can heal either body nor soul. By God's working, it may e the cleansing and healing of both. But Baptism as more than the Angel; it has the Spirit of God bless its waters. And in the fountain for sin and ncleanness, healing, cleansing, and refreshment is liven by Him always, and to all.

Of the many there waiting so eagerly one is pecially to be pitied. Thirty-eight years a cripple, ainfully dragging himself to the pool in hopes of a are; helpless and friendless, and so year after ear disappointed because another stepped down efore him! Even as sin, long indulged, cripples as soul, and in the hour of need there is none of s old companions to help.

He does not know Jesus. Therefore no "Lord, elp me," rises to his lips. But the Merciful One, he Lord of Mercy, knew him. Wilt thou be made hole? Will He? He who had been willing it ll these years, and in vain! He replies, declaring is friendlessness, his repeated but fruitless efforts. He had no man. When human help fails us, then is he Lord's opportunity. The word is spoken. The nan takes up his bed and walks.

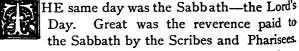
A picture here of the world lying in sin, making

its vain efforts after healing, and all in vain. A picture too of each single soul, which, having let sin get the dominion, struggles fruitlessly to be set free. Oh, that the miracle may be fulfilled to the world and to us! Have we this poor man's earnest longing for salvation? his persevering efforts? his hoping, in spite of repeated disappointment and friendlessness, that each succeeding year may bring the cure he sought. Thirty-eight years! And at last the Healer has come. He is free; walking; carrying his bed. The cure is thorough.

So He can cure, after years of sin; and cure in His own mighty way. Yes, even apart from those healing waters. When all human ministry is hindered, the Lord Himself can supply the cleansing, the absolution, the salvation. We may not presume to limit His grace.

But still less can we presume to despise His appointed means. He came Himself as a Healer. But of all who waited, *one only* was restored.

129. The Fews offended. St. John v. 9-16.



Their strict observance of it would be seen and remarked by the people. And keeping it so strictly themselves, they might boldly rebuke any who offended against the Commandment. They forgot that the Sabbath was mercifully intended as well

or man's rest and happiness as for God's glory. They insisted on the letter of the law. They could not understand its spirit.

Therefore they rebuked this man for carrying his sed on the Sabbath day. But he, filled with joy and gratitude, feels in his heart that One greater han the Sabbath will hold him guiltless. What he loes he does by command of one who has worked a special miracle; one who must have come from God; one who therefore has a right to interpret the commandment of God. Who that healer was, he loes not know. Iesus had withdrawn Himself.

He did not yet know Jesus, who He was. But he had had faith to be healed. Blessed comfort here for poor souls whose knowledge is imperfect, but who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that they have life through His Name!

Yet this at least he knows—that every good gift is from God. And therefore his voice shall be heard in praise and thanksgiving in the Temple of God. Ps. xliii. 4. There the Lord finds him, and speaks that word of warning so necessary in our hours of joy. For even the forgiveness of sins, the assurance of reconciliation, the removal of the burden borne for so many years, brings its own dangers. Repentance and conversion are no easy things, begun and ended in a moment. Sinners we have been; pardoned sinners now, if you will, converted, reconciled, absolved, and freed; joyful and thankful in our new life. Let our first journey be

to the House of God. Let us be there for the Salviour to find us. And let this saying sink deep into our heart: Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee. There can be a worse thing then, to the body than thirty and eight years of infirmity; a worse thing to the soul than its life of old sin! Better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to fall back into perdition. 2 St. Peter ii. 21.

The man departed. He is able now to answer the Pharisees. They had asked who had permitted him to break the Sabbath. That was their view of the miracle. He sees more clearly. He answers that it was Jesus who had made him whole. The ignorant man has more understanding than his teachers. Ps. cxix. 99. He sees the power and the love of Jesus. They observe only to find fault

By this defiance of their prejudices now, if not before, the Lord has raised that spirit of envy and hatred which, daily growing stronger, at last nailed Him to the Cross. They persecute Him, and seek to slay Him, because He had done this great work of mercy, in Bethesda—the House of Mercy—on the Lord's day, which He had made for man.

130. Fesus equal with God. St. Fohn v. 17-2.

E hear now, for the first time, of this charge of breaking the Sabbath. The simpler people of Galilee had found no fault with

Jesus for casting out a devil on the Sabbath day.

St. Mark i. 21. At Jerusalem He was face to face with the stricter teachers of the law. Observe how He justifies Himself here. Not by appealing to the great law of compassion, as He does elsewhere. St. Matt. xii. 11. But by reference to His Father. Though God rested on the Sabbath day from the work of creation, it was not as one tired and needing repose. God's rest is work, wisdom, care, preservation, blessing. God works every day. Else should we perish. And God was His Father. Therefore may the Son likewise work.

So He claims to be the SON OF GOD. So He makes Himself equal with God. St. John's great object in writing was that men might believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Ch. xx. 31. He began by telling us that THE WORD was in the beginning, with God, Himself God. Ch. i. 1. He has gathered up for us many sayings of THE WORD, declaring that same wonderful doctrine, the very keystone of our faith as Christians, the rock on which His Church is built. Jesus said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

The Jews therefore, who had already begun their persecution, sought the more to kill Him. They were very jealous for the honour of God's Name; very quick to demand the punishment of the blasphemer, that is, of any man who spoke in dishonour of God. How does Jesus meet this charge? Does He hasten to explain His words? On the contrary, He repeats them. The Son does not act of Hims

self. As He is one with the Father in substance, so is He in will and in act. What the Father does the Son does. Even so far as this—that the Son-giveth life to whom He will; that the Son shall be judge of all; that the Son shall be honoured with the same glory with which the Father is honoured. The Son shall give life, everlasting life even now, to all who shall hear His word with faith in the Father. The Son shall speak, and raise the dead from their graves. Life in Himself, as a Fountain of Life, is the Father's gift to the Son, that it may be the Son's gift to His disciples. Life even now. Hereafter the judgment-seat and the sentence. Then, life or death eternal, as the Son shall will.

These are very awful words; words which no mere man could have spoken; words which leave no doubt in our minds that Jesus made Himself equal with God, and requires us to honour Him as God. So the Jews understood Him, and were horror-struck at what they deemed His blasphemy. So we understand Him, and rejoice and adore. We say, the Father is God, the Son is God; not different Gods, but one God. Yet not as if the Son were the Father. For the Son is sent by the Father. He doeth nothing of Himself.

This is a great mystery—the Oneness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus, the Son of Mary, is God. God, the Son, was born of a woman, and shed His Blood upon the Cross.

O LORD GOD, Lamb of GOD, SON of the ATHER, have mercy upon us.

31. The witnesses to Jesus. St. John v. 30-47.

OT of Himself does Jesus do these miracles.
It is of His Father's will that He works and judges. This is the true secret of all

ower, of all right judgment, that men should do the Father's will, not their own.

His hearers cannot receive these sayings. ses not at once condemn them on this account. le admits that a man's witness to himself is not ways sufficient. It may be untrue. Therefore le appeals to testimony which they must receive. irst, to John the Baptist, who was believed by all ie people to be a prophet sent from God. St. latthew xxi. 26. He had borne witness to the uth, pointing to Iesus as the Lamb of God. But sus has a greater witness than John's, even His iracles. And the Father Himself hath borne itness, by the Voice from Heaven. They did ot know enough of the Father to recognize His itness; nor to see that the Father was in Jesus, 1d He in the Father. St. John xiv. 9-10. itness was lost upon them. Still they had other itnesses—the Scriptures. The testimony conrning Jesus ran through all prophecy, from Moses the holy Baptist. Rev. xix. 10.

The Jews knew that the Scriptures were given ot only as a law of daily life, but as the guide to

the Messiah, Gal. iii. 24. Yet they would not ceive Him, of whom the Scriptures testified.

What hindered? The same things which hin men now, even while they confess with their that Jesus is the Son of God.

One reason was, that looking on Him worldly or fleshly hearts, they found no beaut Him that they should desire Him. Another, having no love for God, they had no real care pleasing Him, no desire of being brought to I And so, refusing the true Christ, these Jews ready to run after false Christs, the Antichrist should come in his own name. 2 Thess. ii. 4; John iv. 3. Chief hindrance of all was their of human praise. This had spoiled their pra their alms, their fasts. This took away their p of believing the truth. St. John xii. 42-43.

Their death would lie at their own door. (will was that they should believe and be so I Tim. ii. 4. The Son of God was before them. evidence was in their ears, and in their has They could look from Jesus to the Scriptures, the Scriptures to Jesus. There was the full scription of Him, His life, His acts, His d Still they would not believe. Who then all rise up against them in the judgment, but same Moses, whose followers they professed to whose witness they stubbornly refused?

Unbelief has its own snares now as then. trifle with the Scriptures, and trim and prune

suit their fancy, professing, meanwhile, to beve in Christ. How long will this last? They to will not believe Moses will soon cease to lieve the Gospel. Then they will give up Jesus so. They will have made shipwreck of the faith. hey will not receive life at His hands.

2. The Subbath, and its obligations. St. Matt. xii. 1-14.

HE second Sabbath after the first, St. Luke vi. 1, means perhaps the second of the great Sabbaths of the Jewish year. The Pass-

er was the first and greatest. St. John xix. 31. ntecost, corresponding with our Whitsuntide, the rond. Another explanation is that St. Luke eaks of the first Sabbath after the second day of leavened bread, that is, a Sabbath at the Passer. At any rate it was an important Sabbath. is renders the lesson the more decided.

The disciples following a Master who had prounced a blessing upon poverty, and hunger, and irst, were often poorly provided. This day ey were glad to satisfy their hunger with e corn growing by the roadside. There was no shonesty or trespass in this; it was distinctly lowed by the law of Moses. Deut. xxiii. 24–25. ne Pharisees found fault with them for breaking e Sabbath, by reaping and thrashing. They had fore found fault with the Lord for healing on this w. Would He again profane the Sabbath? He knew their unspoken thoughts. Ps. cxxxix His wisdom puts their foolishness to shame. The withered hand is restored whole as the other. The Lord's reasoning is to be considered well both cases. In the first, in order to clear His disciples He referred to David's behaviour under the pressure of hunger, I Sam. xxi. 6. David, flying from Saul, applied to the High Priest for food Now there was none at hand but the Shew-bread hallowed bread, solemnly set before God as at offering and memorial sacrifice every Sabbath is the name of the twelve tribes. After the loaves had been set in order on the Lord's Table, incense was placed upon them, signifying that, as the sweet smoke of the incense ascended up to the heaven, so the twelve tribes, represented by these twelve loaves, should be carried up in memorial, a sacrifice and sweet smelling savour, before the throne of God. Eph. v. 2. This bread, hallowed to God, and offered to Him in sacrifice, was to be eaten by the priests only. Levit. xxiv. 5-9. Nevertheless the High Priest gave of this bread to David and his men. Human life was at stake. God, in such extremity, would have mercy rather than sacrifice So, in the services of the Temple, the priests labour all the Sabbath. They are blameless. The work must be done. In this case the disciples have not so far infringed the law. "Moreover," the Lord says

"what they do they do in the sight of Me, the Son of Man. I am Lord of the Sabbath. I lay down

e laws for its observance. The Sabbath, like all od's law, was made for man's happiness. You ridently think that men were created simply for e sake of the Sabbath."

In the other instance the Lord appeals to their wn natural kindness. No one would let an animal ie for want of food or help, Sabbath or no abbath. To do good, to save life, was an acknow-dged duty. Much more was it a duty to relieve suffering brother or sister. Only a narrow, hyporitical mind would find fault with such a work. This, then, is the law of the Sabbath. All works f necessity and mercy keep it holy.

With these miracles we may compare St. Luke iii. 10-17.

33. Fesus ministering at the Sea of Galilee. St. Mark iii. 7–12; St. Matt. xii. 15–21.

T was not yet the purpose of Jesus to withstand His enemies face to face. Our great High Priest had a ministry to fulfil, a

hurch to build, disciples to teach, before He could ffer the atoning Sacrifice. He therefore quitted the cities, and withdrew to the western shores of the Sea of Galilee. His mighty works and gracious ords have not been without effect. Great multiples follow Him; the simpler folk of Galilee, the etter taught from Judea; many from the Southern and Eastern provinces; some even from the Normann Coasts of Tyre and Sidon, Gentiles who

will carry His fame back to that poor mother will daughter was grievously vexed with a devil. Matt. xv. 21-30. And He healed them all, pla and unclean spirits; charging them all, these clean spirits especially, not to make Him kr For they knew that He was the Christ.

Again St. Matthew draws attention to His ment of ancient prophecy. The servant o Lord was to draw all men unto Him by His ness and gentleness, by quiet persuasion and compassion. Gentiles as well as Jews were t His judgment, and to trust in His Name.

In this same spirit must the minister of the His Meater's work. Not by thrusting H forward, not by noisy disputations, but by he diligent seeking after the wandering sheep strive, and cry, and let his voice be heard streets, does not prove a man to be a faithful herd. Unknown and yet well known, 2 Cor.—unknown to human praise, well-known to Searcher of hearts—the ministers of God app themselves in old times. So shall it be now, send many such in our Church, humbly and c doing their Master's work, to shine hereafter stars for ever and ever, as having turned ma righteousness! Dan. xii. 3.

So, indeed, He works now, rather by the small voice of His Holy Spirit, than by any manifestation of His power. The Kingdom cometh not with observation. It grows is

from seed time to harvest, like that wondrous ile of Solomon, in which was heard never dint e nor ring of hammer. I Kings vi. 7. It is no most eloquent sermon, it is the word spoken heart to heart, which wins souls.

us will now choose from His disciples the ve, to be with Him, to minister and rule in lingdom. And with what care and deliber! He who knew all hearts, who had these about Him for months, who foresaw all things, to call them to this office without a whole 's prayer to God.

l prayer is a mystery. How great a mystery the prayers of the Son of God, of Him to 1, as God, all power belonged from all eternity! aze with awe. We cannot understand these nunings of the Son with the Father. Enough to see in this the example of seeking God's and blessing as well in those things which we see in those which we hope for!

The Twelve Apostles Ordained. St. Luke vi. 12-17.

FTER the night spent in prayer Jesus called unto Him the disciples, whom He will, that He may choose the fittest for the great. In this He is leaving His Church an exe how the holy office of the ministry is to be ed on even unto the end of the world. First is the long night's prayer. Therefore the

Church has her Ember seasons, the we each Ordination Sunday. Then she pre with a special collect, imploring the gu God; first for the Bishops, who have to send labourers into the Lord's vineyard, may make choice of fit persons; and these persons, that, being endued with trutine and innocency of life, they may serve in their high calling.

We sometimes hear complaints that the are not what they ought to be. That is gether the Bishop's fault. It is quite as fault of the people. They neglect the En They never make this matter a subject of They would never dream of continuing all prayer to God that the Church, being from false apostles may be ordered and g faithful and true pastors. And then they because God does not give what they he cared to ask! Is this reasonable?

He calleth whom He will;—for no mathis honour of the ministry but he that is God, Heb. v. 4. Into the mountain;—ev had called Moses. For the true priest of go apart from the world, seeking the thin are above. Col.iii. 2. And they came unto for men must be labourers together v I Cor. iii. 9, in this office, freely giving ther His service. These He appointed to be v that they might learn by His teaching and

e priest of God must be not a novice, I Tim. out one rightly instructed and proved. Un1 and ignorant men they seemed, according world's measure. But, taught by Him for g, Acts i. 21–22, they received a teaching no human wisdom could resist.

se twelve He chose, and named Apostles, Sent. It is as more than messengers, it is resentatives of Himself that they are sent. nt they must be. For how otherwise could reach? Rom. x. 15; sent by Christ, even as was sent by His Father. St. John xx. 21. elve Apostles! A mysterious number, occurten in the Scriptures, Old and New, signifying etion and perfection; the number of the tribes el, the number of the gates of the Heavenly

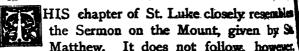
er stands first; first in order, though not as sing authority over his brethren. Judas always last, with this terrible addition—also betrayed Him; Judas known to the rom the first, but chosen, taught, borne with, orth, until his work was accomplished!

lem! Rev. xxi. 13.

find some little differences in their names, teir order. It is generally supposed that Barnew is the same as Nathanael; that Lebbæus, haddæus are other names for Judas their of James; and that Simon's zealous charactold in his surname, Cananites, or Zelotes. v they are chosen, these twelve; and one of

them is a devil. Even the list of the Apostes his us tremble, lest we too betray Jesus.

135. The Sermon on the plain. St. Luke vi. 17-19.



that it is actually the same discourse. There were some miracles which our blessed Lord performed a second time. Not merely the general miracles of healing sickness and casting out devils, but the more special miracles; the feeding the multitudes, for instance; driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple; providing a draught of fishes to the wearied disciples. These miracles, so nearly alike, yet have their differences, their own important lessons. Therefore it is not unreasonable to suppose that Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer at two different times; and that He preached this sermon, once on the mountain, in the form given by St. Matthew, and again, after the election of His Apostles, on the plain, as it is written by St. Luke.

He came down with the Twelve from the mountain, where He had spent the night in prayer, and stood in the plain—some level place, it may be, half way between the mountain top and the low ground near the sea. A crowd of disciples were gathered around Him, with a multitude from all quarters, waiting to be taught and healed. Already they had learned this precious truth, that the healing

Same from the Body of Jesus. Therefore they sought to touch Him. For power was going out of Him, and was healing them all.

Does not this help us to understand the real meaning of believing in Jesus. Some persons speak of faith in such a way that they seem to have lost sight of a real living Saviour. They are full of doctrines, and explanations of the conditions on which we are to be called, and justified, and sanctified, So that, in the cloud of their hard words and puzzling explanations, we lose sight of the Person and Face of Iesus. The great foundations of the Church are the belief that Iesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that from His Body—that is, His Human Nature—power is going forth to heal us: and that we must touch Him. It is not a man's faith that saves him. It is the touch of the Human Nature of Jesus; it is his being one with Christ, his being in Christ. This is what the Church means when she brings her children to Baptism, and decks the Altar for the Sacred Feast. If sinners are to be healed they must touch Jesus. And to them who touch in faith, the healing power will come out from Him.

When He had blessed these suffering bodies, the Divine Preacher speaks blessing to the suffering souls. St. Matthew writes for Jewish readers. He shews the Lord as a Lawgiver, teaching a fuller, gentler law than that of Moses. St. Luke writes for the heathen. He therefore shews the Lord as

exhorting and persuading, rather than as spe with authority; as leading the world, by gentler, purer rules of conduct, towards that " good" which all professed to seek. Not it heights of worldly knowledge, not in checking tender human affections, not in the lust of the f in pomp and vainglory, was true happiness to found even in this life. Neither was it to be fo in empty talk, and religious profession. The ho built upon the firm foundation of loving obedien that alone should stand. And that should stand ever!

136. The Centurion's servant. St. Luke vii. 1-10



HE sermon on the plain ended, Jesus is again at Capernaum. He is met at once with a cry for help.

At this time the whole of the civilized world was under the dominion of the Romans. soldiers were to be found everywhere. Some of these in Judæa had learned to acknowledge and to worship the God of the Jews. They were thereupor admitted into the Jewish religion, as proselytes, tha is, converts. But not on equal terms. The Gen tile was separated from the Jew in the worship o the Temple, and in other respects; kept far off by middle wall of partition. Eph. ii. 14.

A centurion, or captain, of the Roman garriso t Capernaum had a sick slave whom he dearl wed. He has heard of Jesus, and would have the

help of the Great Healer. But, as a Gentile, he is too humble to make the request in person. He therefore begs the Elders of the Jews to intercede for Him. This they do most willingly. For he had strong claims upon them. He loved their nation, and therefore would carry out the laws justly. He had built them a place of worship, thereby ministering to their spiritual wants. If any man was worthy, never one more than he. Loving towards his slave, kind and generous towards the people among whom he dwelt-and the Romans, for the most part, paid little respect to slaves or Jewshaving faith in the power and the will of Jesus. humbling himself as unworthy, this Roman soldier stands before us as a signal proof of the Father's love to His children outside the Covenant. Here were fruits of God's Spirit, in abundance.

The Elders make their request to Jesus, pleading his worthiness. But he, feeling his unworthiness before, feels it now still more. Has he not been too bold in asking that Jesus should come down? He sends other messengers. He is not worthy of the Lord's presence under his roof. The soldier knows what the word of authority is, what it is to obey and to be obeyed. His faith sees the Angels as so many servants of Christ, ready to do His pleasure. Ps. ciii. 21; St. Matt. xxvi. 53. It sees diseases as so many evil spirits departing at His word. Let the Lord only speak, and my servant shall be healed.



has surpassed the faith of Israel! The first the Gentiles are coming in. Isa. lx. 5.

But where is Israel after the flesh? Unbelieving, and so cast out.

And now we are of the Church of Christ's Israel. Yet it may be, some heathen, lately of Jesus, may have greater faith than we. his consciousness of unworthiness, may I worthy. He may have Jesus in his heart, the Roman Centurion. He may win the for himself, and his household. And we, t dren of the Kingdom, we may have found for him, and yet be ourselves cast out at la believing.

137. The widow of Nain. St. Luke vii.



OW simply told! We see it all; t with His disciples and the great m going from Capernaum to Nain, a What a word was that! What a sight! No wonder that they who saw it feared, and glorified God. No wonder that the rumour of Him went forth throughout all that country.

The Lord had compassion on the weeping woman, a widow and childless. His sacred human heart was filled with all tender pure affections. His mighty works were no acts of cold unfeeling power. They sprang out of the infinite compassion of one who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, who was afflicted in all our affliction. Did He not. seeing this poor lonely woman, think of His own Mother-she likewise a widow, soon to be mourning beneath the Cross, and at the tomb, of her only son? This poor mother's tears must have spoken to His heart. And is it not so now with the mourner's tears? we weep, and He has compassion on us. Already He has comforted us. For, though He does not restore our loved ones to our arms, by His death He hath destroyed Death, and by His rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting Life.

But she has made no prayer to Him. Why then does He give her this great boon? Surely her tears were prayers. He despises not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sortowful. Ps. x. 19. There was her prayer. And faith was proved by her ceasing to weep, by the bearers standing still, at His command. Therefore the miracle is worked openly. All are engaged in a work of mercy, with serious and chastened hearts.

He touched the bier. Again declaring Himself at above receiving defilement from a corpse. Exodus and xix. 16. Again declaring that health and life flow out of His Living and Life-giving Body. He spoke the word. And the dead man sat up. He needs not to pray, or to wait, as the prophets before Him. I Kings xvii. 20; 2 Kings iv. 34; as His Apostle after Him. Acts ix. 40. The Son of God giveth life to whom He will. St. John v. 21-25. And He delivered him to his mother.

A parable, assuredly, as well as a miracle. See the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, dead spiritually, carried out of the city of the living, by the evil spirits of his own lust; ready for the burial. Sin is death. Rev. iii. I. The Church, his mother, weeps over him. But she cannot give Him life. Christ must come near, He must bid the bearers stop, He must touch the bier, and speak the word. So He gives life. Then, having given life, He delivers the risen soul to the Church. It is for her henceforward to tend him, and feed him, with a mother's care, with the Word and Sacraments. It is for him to see in her love the earthly ministrations of a love which is Almighty and Eternal.

138. The message from John in prison. St. Matt. xi. 2-15; St. Luke vii. 18-28.



OHN the Baptist had now been for some time Herod's prisoner in the Castle of Machærus, near the Dead Sea, kindly reated, St. Mark vi. 20, and allowed to see his friends. But his ministry was ended. And hearing in his prison the works of Christ—for such miracles must be the works of the Christ, and of mone other—and perceiving that Jesus was now fully shewing Himself to men, he desires that his disciples shall become followers of the Lamb of God. Therefore he sends them with this question, Art Thou He that should come?

It was not to satisfy his own faith. That was firmly fixed, founded on the teaching from Heaven, and confessed publicly. St. John i. 32-33. It was for their sakes. Perhaps John's disciples were unwilling to leave their old master.

. Art thou He that should come? It is the same as saying, "Art thou the Christ?" For all looked for the coming One, foretold so long by type and prophecy. Hab. ii. 13. "Blessed is He that cometh!" St. Matt. xxi. o. And what is His answer? He does not say, "I am the Christ." They must see, and decide. In that same hour He is working the mightiest miracles. In that same hour He is preaching the good tidings to the poor. They know what the old prophecies had said of Him that should come. Isa. xxx. 4-6; lxi. 1-2. Let them tell John what they have seen and heard. John would teach them, if they could not themselves understand. Blessed were they, and all, who, seeing these works, could believe. For some, instead of believing, were offended; and not being able to deny the

miracles accused the Lord of being in league the devil. St. Luke xi. 15.

The men depart, and Jesus bears witness t greatness of John; as if some there pr imagined that John himself were doubting. Me before they had flocked to John's ministry. what sort of a preacher had they found him? he change his doctrine at every breath of the 1 ple's voice, with no settled faith, seeking only please? Was he aiming at his own case and vancement, a self-indulgent flatterer? Was he prophet? Yea, and more. He was the very m senger before the face of the Christ, Mal. iii. greater than all the prophets. Yet envy him n The least in the Kingdom of Heaven is great than he. The least of those who have believed a been baptized into My Kingdom and Church greater than the greatest in the old and decayi Covenant. Not as if John were shut out of the Kingdom. But in this way; that to have know Christ's finished Redemption, and to have be made a member of Christ in Baptism, is a bett and greater thing than to have had the gift prophecy, and to have died without seeing. Jo was greatest of the natural birth. They are be of the Spirit, born of God. I St John iii. o.

He was the last as he was the greatest of 1 prophets, preaching the nearness of this sa Kingdom of Heaven, into which men are n violently pressing in. For he who finds entrain

==== .

A its narrow gate must shrive. St. Luke xiii. 24. The end of the law and of the Prophets has come. Here was Elias, not in person, but in spirit and shwer, witnessing to Me, the Christ of God. Mal. 4. 5. He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

So by His works, and by His appeal to proshecy, Jesus declared to the people that He was the Christ, He that should come.

The children in the Market place. St. Luke vii. 29-35.

N these sayings the Lord touched men's hearts. The despised taxgatherers, notorious sinners, men and women, had hung

the the witness in themselves. The Pharisees and Lawyers on the contrary, had listened to John with an empty curiosity. He was no prophet for them. They came with the same empty curiosity to see the miracles of Jesus, and to hear His teaching. He, in like manner, was no Prophet to them. Therefore the Lord speaks this parable of the children in the market place.

The children in Eastern cities had their little games, as children have now. They used to play at marriage feasts, and at funerals, in pretended morriment and grief. One little party would pipe merry tune and call upon the rest to dance;

would raise the cry of the mourner and requiret others to lament. But sometimes the others we in no mood for play. They would neither dance the sound of the flute, nor weep at the mourne cry. There was no pleasing them, either we They were peevish and discontented.

So with the Jews John came with mourni the stern, lonely man of the desert, preaching pentance and the wrath to come. Did that plear

No. The Pharisees quickly put him aside. I hath a devil. Then God tried them with a gentl more sympathizing messenger. The Son of M came sitting at their tables, sharing in their engineets. Did that please? He too was put asi Behold a glutton and a drunkard; the friend of worst and lowest of the people. The Pharis would neither lament with John nor rejoice w Jesus. They would not be pleased. Each was wrong. By their perversity they put it out God's power to draw them into His Church.

Is there nothing of this among us? Wha the Church's Fast and Festival but the same t fold invitation to the mournful and the me hearted. The Church nowadays, like her I and His Apostles, would be all things to all r if she may by any means save some. I ix. 22. Is a soul burdened with the sens its sins? She weeps to those who will weep. vent, and Lent, and Holy week are her time mourning, mourning over her children's sins,

erings of Jesus. Is a soul rejoicing in the work which the Lord has done for it? She s to them that will rejoice. She has her mas, and Easter, and Whitsuntide. she pipes to her children in the decorated lary, the full procession, the uplifted strain of and hymn. At another she lays aside her ty, clothing herself in sackcloth and ashes, as ere; and with the stern voice of Commination. ice, and the warnings of Advent, tells of the or of the Lord, and gathers her children around to lament for their sins. But the world will come. One says, "What means this outside ow? It is far too cheerful for sinful hearts." nother complains, "Why all this mourning over 1, this long watch and fast and prayer, as if the hristian life were nothing but fear?" In vain the hurch varies her call. They will not hear. But e manifold wisdom of God, made known by the hurch, Eph. iii. 10, is acknowledged by the wise. hey who have found that wisdom have found life.

φ. Earthly glory; heavenly lowliness. St. Matt. xi. 20–30.

O receive Christ, or to reject Him, these are the only two courses open to the world; to be saved or to be lost eternally, the only

vo ends to which we can come. The Lord's alleing eye divides the sheep from the goats. here is no middle place for any. Here before

Him stood these two classes—the Publican sinners pressing into the Kingdom of Go Pharisees rejecting God's counsel, against selves, yes, and worse, hindering them that enter in. St. Luke xi. 52. From thes thoughts turn to the cities where He had d many mighty works in vain. There were Ch and Bethsaida, on the Sea of Galilee, ric populous, with their synagogues and their te To them He had manifested Himself mig word and deed. From Bethsaida He had at least three of His Apostles. Would no labour, and with many prayers, to bring brethren to Jesus? There was Capernaum, lifted up to heaven in the fulness and pride worldly beauty and prosperity; known as F. city by reason of His frequent and pro visits. Yet they repented not. Oh, if and Sidon, those thrones of worldly pi Sodom and Gomorrah, those dens of flesh had seen those mighty works, and heard th to repentance, they would not so have cas their salvation. With such greater opport they would have repented. Therefore shal ment be in proportion to the opportunities and the grace despised. Better shall it Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomon that Day, than for the Jewish cities who and hearing the Son of God wilfully r Him.

Why then had He not given those ancient cities: like opportunities? A vain question, which man can answer. We believe that all He does wise, and merciful; and just. "What is that to e? Follow Thou Me," is the Lord's reply, en we seek to enter into His secrets.

Yet if we would know the ways of God, our rd's words hold the key of knowledge. ret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. e Jewish Rulers believed themselves to be wise I prudent. Therefore they could not believe in sus. They said that they saw. Therefore they re blind. They would not receive light from : True Light. Already is the loving Lord spised and rejected. Already the stern voice of braiding is mingled with the pleading invitation. ie joy remains to Him. Though these things. hidden from the wise and prudent they are realed unto the babes. And to the babes He ns: to the meek and lowly in heart, to all who our and are heavy laden. Let them draw near, take His voke, and learn of Him. That learnshall be the wisdom of God, that yoke eternal ŧ.

How much of this does the world believe now? boast in our country's glory. We boast of igious enlightenment and high morality. How I it stand with Christian England at that day? all we ourselves have found the rest for our own.

141. The woman that was a Sister. St. Lul 35-39.

EEK and lowly, the Saviour will refuse to sit at meat with any. He His place one day at the Pharisee's

At another He abides with Zacchæus the Pub So He receiveth sinners, and eateth with their ... The Pharisee, Simon, desired that He woul with him. Not so much out of respect and ho as from the pride of having one so sought aff his guest. For he neglects to offer those con and simple acts of courtesy which form a patime eastern hospitality. There is no water but for the feet of Jesus, Gen. xviii. 4; no kiss of come given. St. Luke xv. 20; no anointing honour. Ps. xlv. 7. He finds His own platthe rich man's table.

The Jews did not sit at table as we do, bu upon couches, resting upon the left elbow. the feet were raised, and could only be tou by a person approaching from behind.

His last words contained the gracious invite to the weary and heavy laden, the promise that would give them rest, St. Matt. xi. 28-30; we sinking deep into many hearts, words to be and proved forthwith. A woman that had be sinner, one whose whole life had been a scor modesty, a glorying in sin, had heard. Under words her soul has woke to a new thought—to

sense of her sins, to the fear of God's wrath, to the hope for pardon. That invitation, that promise was for her. She must go to Jesus. And at once!

But He is no longer among the crowd. He is in the Pharisee's house. She must see Him at once, even there. She makes her way into the very guest chamber, while the guests stare at her as upon some poor crazed or drunken creature, and takes her station behind Him. Will He not turn, and shrink from her as unclean, far fouler than the leper, and bid her begone? She touches Him! She weeps, and kisses His feet! She takes a box of very precious ointment, and anoints them! And He, by His silence, approves of her presence and accepts her offering. The Pharisees are more than amazed. They are shocked and indignant. "He is no prophet after all," they say; "or He would have known this creature's character."

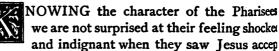
So far they are right. He is more than a prophet. He knows that she was a sinner. He knows also that her heart is changed. She is no more a sinner in this sense, hardened and defiant. She is a penitent. She is forgiven. She loves.

The Pharisee's scorn passes over her unheeded. She has found Him whom her soul loveth; she holds Him, and will not let Him go. Cant. iii. 4. There she waits at His Feet, until He has given her rest in, "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go in peace."

Her name is not told us, though some suppose that she was Mary of Magdala. The tender pity

of the holy writers leaves the sinful and penitest women unnamed, St. John viii. I-IO, lest their shame should be spoken against them by the Pharisees of future times. We know her only as "the woman that was a sinner;" the first to seek Jesus for the healing of her soul; enduring the bitterest pain a woman can endure—the loathing eyes of men, that she might touch Him and honour Him; the much loving, and the much forgiven.

142. The two debtors. St. Luke vii. 40-50.



and approve this woman's offering. Her ver presence was an offence to them. What busines had such an one within their doors! And He!—He can only be excused, as not knowing who an what she was. But then He can be no prophet!

It is time for the Lord to clear Himself befor them. This He does in the parable of the tw debtors, shewing that He is indeed a prophet, abl to read Simon's secret thoughts, and therefor knowing all hearts. By Simon's confession, tha debtor will love the most to whom the heavie debt has been forgiven. What were Simon's proof of love? In his own house he had neglected th accustomed duties of hospitality; no water, n towel, no kiss, no anointing oil; no respect shewn therefore no love felt! And if no love felt, then n sense of forgiveness, no sense of sin! That is what Simon is brought to in the argument. A sinner he must be; a penitent he is not.

But this woman has supplied all that he left undone. Her tears are the water; her hair the towel; her kisses on the Lord's feet, the welcome; her costly ointment, the anointing of honour.

And if Simon had looked deeper he might have seen in these the instruments of unrighteousness rescued, and hallowed to Christ. The eye with its unholy gaze, the hair with its immodest vanity, the lip with its vain and impure words, the ointment with its self-indulgent luxury, all are subdued to dimness, and disfigurement, and silence, at the very feet of Jesus. There the ointment shall be poured. She dares not, like Mary of Bethany, anoint His reverend Head. St. Mark. xiv. 3. It is love in penitence, love pure, love daring, love which cannot be satisfied except it tell itself, though at the cost of the bitterest scorn.

We are all debtors. Simon had forgotten this. It was quite true that he was not like this woman. Nevertheless he had broken the law of God, and as having received more grace than she had, he was so far the more indebted. But he tried to pass himself off as better than he was. Therefore the Lord brought him back to this;—that he was a debtor, unable to pay; that he had not yet learned his need of mercy; and that his want of love was easily explained, because those only can

love much who have felt the blessing of forgiveners. Is it possible to have a livelier picture of the danger of that self-righteous soul, which keeps up appearances without any sense of its sin, any heart for Christ? Could there be a more encouraging, comforting proof of Christ's faithfulness in giving rest to the weary and heavy laden?

It will not do to compare ourselves with others. Measure yourself by the perfect example of Jesus. Try yourself by your love for Him. If we love much, we may trust that, though we have sinned much, much has been forgiven.

143. The Blind and Dumb. St. Luke viii. 1-3; St. Mark iii. 19-21; St. Matt. xii. 22.



ITH all His miracles of healing, the Lord never let the disciples imagine that Hiswork lay in the cure of bodily suffering. He came

to preach the Gospel, St. Luke iv. 43, and now resumes His journeys from city to city. And the Twelve were with Him. Hitherto we have heard of the disciples, the large body of followers, sometimes more, sometimes fewer. Now the Twelve are especially mentioned. And as with Him—His chosen followers, learning their work, practising under the Master's eye, before they are sent forth as His Apostles, or ambassadors. Certain women also, whom He has delivered from the greatest evils of soul and body, follow them. By their kindness the Lord of all is provided with His daily bread.

This will help us to a better understanding of His miracles. That power He used Himself, and gave to His disciples, for higher purpose than their own particular benefit. He who fed five thousand with five loaves and two small fishes, knew what it was to suffer hunger. So St. Paul, who restored Eutychus to life, sorrowed with no light sorrow over his sick brother Epaphroditus. Phil. ii. 26–27. When the Lord's own wants were not supplied by the ordinary ministrations of His friends, He endured hunger, and thirst, and fatigue. So did His Apostles. No miracle was worked except to teach, to awaken, to confirm, or to rebuke.

He is passing through the cities of Galilee, and the multitude throng Him, leaving Him leisure neither for meals nor for rest. His brethren, not yet believing on Him, deem Him a madman. Such are the differing opinions. So, very often, will men regard the religious earnestness of their relations. "Is he anxious about his salvation? distressed about his sins? trying to live a new life? Oh; he is mad." But how should he be vexed at this, when his Master was called by His own friends a madman, yes, and a devil, before him?

Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; or, as St. Luke puts it, He was casting out a devil and it was dumb. In these different ways the Holy Spirit of God shows us the union existing between that evil one and the single soul. St. Paul says, He that is joined unto

the Lord is one Spirit. I Cor. vi. 17. In the same way he that is possessed by a devil is one spirit with Satan. Here the possessed is blind and dumb. He cannot see the glorious works, or the loving face, of the Saviour. He cannot, though he hear of Him, ask the way. Happily, he has friends who bring him. Their faith is accepted, and his own perfected. How great his joy, as the Voice of Almighty power and love sounded in his ears; and the blind and dumb both spake and saw!

All these same miracles He works to-day. But spiritually. Blind eyes and dumb lips are too frequent among us. Who shall give sight and speech, but He, the Brightness and the Word of God? Oh, that He would open our eyes that we might see the wondrous things of His law! Oh, that He would open our lips, that our mouth might shew forth His praise!

144. The Pharisees rebuked. St. Mark iii. 22-30.

HE common people, seeing this great miracle, instinctively feel and confess the truth.

Is not this the Son of David? The

Pharisees and Scribes who came down from Jerusalem to watch Him, have seen the miracle also. They cannot gainsay it. How shall they prevent the people from going after Him? How shall they explain the miracle? There is but one way. They must accuse Him of being in league with the Devil. This therefore is their comment; "He hath

Beelzebub, the Prince of the devils, as His ally. Of gourse he that sent the devils in is able to send them out." A fearful instance this of their resistance to the Holy Spirit! Acts vii. 51.

This stubborn objection is not made in His hearing. But He replies, knowing their thoughts, and thereby proving His power. His argument is very simple. The devil's great object is to possess men, to take them captive at his will. 2 Tim. ii. 26. That done, he wants no more. How would he further his purposes by doing and undoing, by holding and then setting free? The thing is absurd. Moreover, there were others besides Jesus casting out devils. His Apostles were doing the same thing. The Pharisees will hardly accuse them of being in league with the devil. No. It is by the Finger of God that Jesus casts out devils, that Finger which the Magicians of cruel, idolatrous Egypt were willing to acknowledge, but which God's own people, like Pharaoh of the hardened heart, steadfastly refuse to see. Ex. viii. 19. It is by the Spirit and the Finger of God that He, and His disciples with Him, are casting out the evil one; and, if they could only see it, and acknowledge it, the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto them. But this same blind and dumb devil has got possession of them; holding them like a strong man armed; only to be cast out by the Stronger than he.

, Thus the Lord would teach them that the Strong-

er than Satan was now come into the world to vanguish him, to bind him, and to spoil his Thus He would teach them that the casting devils from the possessed, the diseased, the body, the maddened brain and the paralysed was but the figure of what He would do soul. For the devil's cruellest work was the sion which he had taken of mankind: so the were his servants, doing his work; some we his children, inheriting his love of sin, his h holiness. Christ had come to overcome the one, to despoil the devil of his power. 14-15, to take away all his armour when trusted, especially the power of death, 14-15; to make those kingdoms which He for himself, the kingdoms of our Lord and Christ. St. Luke iv. 6.; Rev. xi. 18.

This blessed triumph of good over evil, o over Satan, will be hastened or delayed, at as we believe and obey. On whose side at the are not on Christ's side, we are against Him. And we know what will be of those who fight against their Lord an

145. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. S xii. 31-32. St. Mark iii. 28-30.

HE mercy of God—who will dare bounds to it? If thou art to forg brother on his repentance sevent

seven times, will not He, who forgiveth all

and healeth all thine infirmities, forgive more often, and more fully still? The place of forgiveness is bever to be denied to such as truly repent.

There is our encouragement, confirmed to us in these words of the Son of Man, the Absolver now, the Judge of all hereafter. Yet He speaks in the name breath, of an unpardonable sin, one from which no absolution of the Church in this world, to divinely-spoken pardon in the world to come, thall ever free the soul. What is this?

It is blasphemy! That we are told very distinctly. And blasphemy is the using words of dishonour and insult. What sort of blasphemy, then? And against whom?

We should have thought that if any blasphemy exceeded in wickedness and horror, it would be blasphemy against the Name which is above every name, the Name of Jesus. Certainly, if we love Him, nothing could grieve us more than words of insult spoken against His dear and glorious Name. But there is a deadlier sin even than this, a sin unto death, concerning which we are not even encouraged to pray. I St. John v. 16.

The sin deadly above all, shutting out from pardon, is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. God forbid that we should ever commit it, ever go near committing it.

Had these Pharisees committed it, then? Our Lord does not positively say so, but it is clear that they went near doing so, or He would not have spoken this terrible warning. And St. Mark tells us why He did so. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

This in fact was their sin, that seeing the might works which He did, they would not acknowledge the goodness of the Doer, or of the act itself. By the power of the Holy Spirit of God He did these things. They could not deny the miracle. But they set it down to the devil's credit. They referred the Holy Spirit's work to the prince of evil spirits. In fact they judged God to be the devil, And they were not afraid to say so.

What had brought them to this? That which may be found in Christian as well as in Jew, in Bible reader and Bible scorner—the obstinate trust in their own judgment, the steady refusal to see good in one who differed from them. Religious prejudice often runs to this length. It sets down to the devil's account that which could not be done except through the Spirit of God. Is not this like the blasphemy of the Pharisees?—blasphemy against the Holy Ghost?

But we must speak on this subject with the greatest caution, lest by our hasty words we cause any to fear. This, at least, we may say positively—that no one who feels sorrow for sin need fear having committed the unpardonable sin. For sorrow for sin is the work of God's Holy Spirit. And wherever God gives repentance, there He gives pardon also.

146. Sins of Speech. St. Matt. xii. 33-37.

uT how to escape this terrible sin? We must go to the root. If the words of the lips are foul and blasphemous, it is because e heart is the same. The Lord's words were

e heart is the same. The Lord's words were bod, to the casting out of devils, to the making the dumb to speak. Therefore His heart was good; he Himself was good. The Pharisees' words ere evil. Therefore their heart—they them-lives—were evil.

Then He takes up the warning of St. John the aptist, calling them a generation of vipers, chilten of the devil. With their evil and corrupt earts, how could they speak good words?

Yet they, with all their boasted knowledge, had assed this over as of little consequence. It is not util we have made some progress in the spiritual that we really understand the importance of it words. The more ignorant a man is, the orse, for the most part, his language. He speaks it freely all he thinks, even the most horrible loughts of anger, and uncleanness, and profanciess. When better taught and better mannered, restrains his tongue. But this refinement is only artial. He is ruling his words by the world's laws, of by God's. His mouth is filled with foolish alking, and jesting, which God has declared to be of convenient. Eph. v. 4. Perhaps there is worse. erhaps there is corrupt communication, filthiness,

anger and malice, Col. iii. 8; although so craftily expressed as not to offend against good manners.

Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? That for every idle, profitless, word—every word not good to the use of edifying, not ministering grate to the hearers, Eph. iv. 29—men shall give accept at the Day of Judgment. We take it ill if any on a remarks upon a hasty word of ours, and calls us to account for it. But this is what the all-seeing God will do. The world says, in its wisdon, "Speech is silver; silence is gold." In this, as in some other things, the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. Only the world, after all, does not act up to its own wise proverb.

Words!—Ah, how great a matter a little for kindleth! And the tongue is a fire. Words!—happiness has been lost, lives have been lost, by words. Heaven has been lost! Yet we go on talking without fear, without thought. And, often, when the world most approves, the Ear of God has been grieved, and the page of God's Book has been marked with the record of many sins.

It is told of a disciple in old times, that, asking of a Saint one rule of Christian perfection, he received this verse; I said, I will take heed unto my ways, that I offend not in my tongue. Ps. xxxix. I. Years passed, ere he came again. So hard was the lesson in practice. Even as St. James says, ch. iii. 2, If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; and keep ae door of my lips.

147. The sign of Jonas. St. Matt. xii. 38-42.

NE would have thought that Jesus had already sufficiently proved Himself to be sent from God by His many and mighty

risacles. Yet His opponents will not be convinced. They have accused Him of being in league with the devil. They next ask Him, challenging Him, or another and a different sign—a sign from Heaven. St. Luke xi. 16. Moses had given them the pillar of fire and of cloud, the bread from Heaven, the thunders and the Voice at Sinai Elijah had twice brought fire from Heaven. For loshua and Hezekiah the sun stayed in its course. Let Jesus shew some such sign as this, and they will believe!

Does He give it? No. When men thus dictate o God, and demand from Him, it is because they vill not believe. To every fresh sign they would nake fresh objection. St. Luke xvi. 31. The Lord will give such signs as please Him, and no others. They shall presently see in Him the sign of Jonas fulfilled. Like that prophet, the Son of Man shall be in His grave for the space of three lays. Then shall He arise and come forth, the preacher of repentance.

Later on in the course of His ministry they nake the same demand, and receive the same

rebuke. The sign of Jonas the prophet, is the Lord's answer to their challenge. St. Matt. xvi. 4.

How fully and exactly it was given, we know. We wonder that they knew not. But they would not know. They shut their eyes to that most wonderful sign—the Resurrection of Jesus after His three days sleep in the tomb. Therefore shall they who saw the lesser sign, they who sought after a lower wisdom, rise up against them in the judgment, and condemn them.

Jonah came with no miracles. His whole preaching was—Yet forty days, and Nineveh and be destroyed. And the heathen people, heather feared and repented in sackcloth and ashes. Jonah iii. Solomon was but an earthly king. And the Queen of Sheba, in her thirst for wisdom, went from her distant home to learn from him. I Kings x. I-13. A greater preacher than Jonah, a wiser than Solomon, the very Word and Wisdom of God was here, among them, warning and teaching. They would neither repent, nor learn. He hath a devil and is mad; that was their reply to His gracious invitations and doctrine.

Who can explain the perversity and obstinacy of the human heart. Jerem. xvii. 9. Men will not believe. They account to themselves for their unbelief, by making their own conditions with God. They tempt Him, asking Him a sign from Heaven. They will even challenge Him, in their blasphemous unbelief, to shew Himself by smiting them

lown in a moment. He, in His greatness and pity, will not give the sign they ask. It would not convince them. Because they do not want to believe.

In His own good time He will shew signs and wonders more than enough; signs and wonders in the day, when the very heathen shall rise up in the ludgment to condemn the people of God, who had Christ among them and refused His word.

148. The inward Light. St. Luke xi. 33-36.



F a man would know clearly what to believe and to do, let him first be true to his conscience.

The light is of no use to the man who cannot see, or who will not see. God made the sun, and nen light their lamps, to give light. But these ruter lights are of no use whatever to the blind. A man must have the inner light, that is, the seeing sye, and must use it, if the outer light is to profit him. Now what the eye is to the body, the conscience is to the soul. God has sent His Son to be the Light of every man that cometh into the world. St. John i. 9. Unless the eye of the soul pe single, the light within it will only be darkness.

These same words are found in St. Matthew, but not all together. There, ch. v. 15, the candle is the Church; there, ch. vi. 22-23, oneness of motive is the lesson enforced. Here, our Lord seems to teach the neccessity of keeping the mind and conscience.

pure and true, that the bright Light of God mas shine into the heart. For sin blinds the eye of the soul, and turns light into darkness. 2 Cor. in 3-6. Here were Scribes and Pharisees walking in the way blaze of the Light of the world. Yet they could not see. They stumbled and fell. How was this?

The explanation is easy. To the blind eye, light and darkness are all the same. And the eye which will not see is just as blind as the eye which will not see. These Pharisees would not see, although everything before them and around them testing that Jesus was Christ. They were not single, and sincere and true to the light which God had given them. They resisted the Holy Spirit. So they went on, until good seemed to them to be evil, and evil seemed to be good; until the light that was in them became darkness, and they crucified the Lord of Glory as a blasphemer. Their narrowness, their envy, their dishonesty, had blinded them. Oh, how great was their darkness!

So men sin away grace. God sends His Son; His Spirit; the Light of the world. He gives the candle of His Church, and of His word. And He gives, also, to every man the inner light, the spiritual discernment of conscience. If this, the eye of the soul, be single and true, it will guide a man safely. But then he must act always according to his conscience. 2 Cor. i. 12. Otherwise, if he trifles with conscience, acting insincerely, trying to pervert its light as Balaam did, it will soon ceases.

uide him aright. It will become dim and treacherus. And he may end in priding himself upon is clearness of sight, his good service to God, St. ohn ix. 41; xvi. 2, his assurance of salvation, hen he is crucifying the Son of God afresh, when e is walking in the very shadow of death.

149. Falling Back. St. Matt. xii. 43-45.

HE Lord had but just now cast out a dumb and deaf spirit. He makes this the text for a parable. Present deliverance is

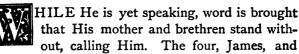
ot salvation itself; only a step forward. Phil. i. 13-14. The ground won must be secured. hen we must start afresh.

This parable would speak with especial life and rce to men who were even now talking about the st miracle in admiration or in scorn. It is a rrible picture. The evil spirit, cast out, wanders dry places where there is no water, no grace of od's Holy Spirit, seeking a new home. Only in e exercise of his tormenting power can he find st. Disappointed, he will return to the soul which : has left; "to my house," he says, as if it were his vn by right. He does return to find it, as it were. aiting for him. It might have been made a emple of God's Holy Spirit, thoroughly furnished ito all good works. But it has remained empty; only decking worldly and fleshly adornments. 'hat could be better? Not one, but seven evil irits enter in now, to dwell there, to make that heart their home for ever. Worse, infinitely w now for that man than at the beginning!

So shall it be, also, unto this wicked general The Jewish nation had had its sins and its pure ments. After the captivity at Babylon the spirit of idolatry had been cast out. But whom God had restored and delivered had do more than bring their house into a fair she decency and adornment. They were not we to receive Christ as their King and Lord. The spirit, now wandering through heathen pe should return, and not alone, to dwell—dre thought!—in his own house. And then Jerus should be destroyed.

Not for Jerusalem only was this parable sp Every soul, from whom the power of Jesus ha out the evil spirit of its besetting sin, may reac fear. Has thy Saviour cast out the spirit of a lust, covetousness, deceit, or whatever evil within thee, and ruled thee as his slave? Take that thou fill his place with the Spirit of God all His sevenfold gifts. Isa. xi. 2-3. Sanctify whole body, soul, and spirit, to be the Temp Christ, an habitation of God through the S Eph. ii. 22. For the eyil one will again see entrance into thy soul, claiming it as his house if he find it empty and ready for him, he wil enter alone. He will bring all such other ut lusts and passions as will best accord with hir and serve his ungodly purposes. So will they pread thy soul, and dwell there, until every good fift be destroyed, God's Holy Spirit grieved and Luenched. To fall back into sins is to fall back into more sins and worse. And there is a state in which repentance is more than difficult, well night impossible. Heb. vi. 4-6.

50. The Lord's Mother and Brethren. St. Luke viii. 19-21; xi. 27-28.



oses, and Simon, and Judas, although called the Lord's brethren, St. Mark vi. 3, were not His brothers in our sense of the word. They were not the sons of His mother, but of His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, St. John xix. 24; St. Mark xv. 40; His cousins, not His brothers. The Church has ever held that the Lord was the only Son of His mother, and reverences her as ever rirgin. But these four were among the twelve, and therefore the brethren who were now with His mother calling Him, were probably other near relations.

He is about His Father's business; and she, not yet fully understanding how He has given up the joy of earthly affections for Heavenly work, is not content to listen at a distance. She would call Him to her. On this, a certain woman, hearing His mother named, cries out in congratulation and

blessing upon the parent of such a son. But He acimai that they may rightly understand wherein Has thy we mother's blessedness really consisted, tells them of sier co relationship than that which is after the flesh; set, t relationship and a blessedness, in which we, thouse seed afar off, may share. Looking round about Him, he wor declares that they who do the will of His Father kshej are to Him as brother, and sister, and mother.

Comfort, and blessing, and glory for us! For aing we cannot help envying those who were so near to me so our Lord as to be called His brothers. Especially in the we gaze with reverence at the lowly maiden, chosen one to be Mother of God. But it was not in this human lesse nearness that she and His brethren are so blessed in this respect, had learned that there was a closer this respect, had learned that there was a closer this respect, had learned that there was a closer this respect, had learned that there was a closer this respect, had learned that there was a closer this respect, had learned that there was a closer this respect, are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. We, if only we do the will of Christ, are as His brother, and sister, and mother.

But, stop! Do not suppose, as some have irreverently supposed, that the Lord in these words is taking affection and honour from His mother to give it to us. The very contrary. He shews us what the blessedness of His mother really is. Blessed was she in having found favour with God, before the Son of the Highest was conceived within her bosom. Blessed was she in her perfect submission to God's will, when she said, "Behold the

handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Blessed was she in her perfect faith. as her cousin Elizabeth, being filled with the Holy Ghost, testified: "Blessed is she that believed." Blessed was she in her perfect hearing and keeping the word of God, when she kept the sayings of the shepherds, and of her Son, and pondered them in her heart. If any child of man is blessed in hearing and doing the word of God, she infinitely more so. Therefore was she meet to be His mother after the flesh also. Therefore is she the Blessed among women. Therefore all generations call her blessed. Therefore is she His mother to all eternity: as having borne Him into the world; as foremost in faith and love. And we, believing and doing, after her example, are in Christ, His brethren, and the dear children of His Father.

151. The Rich Fool. St. Luke xii. 13-21.

HE Gospel Story, as given by St. Luke, here brings in our Blessed Lord's rebuke of the Pharisees, with His warnings to the

disciples to beware of their hypocrisy, and to do all in the fear of God. Very likely these solemn words were spoken twice. They are put by St. Matthew and St. Mark as belonging to a later period of His ministry; the woes pronounced upon the Pharisees to the last days before His death, St. Matt. xxiii. 35; the warnings of the disciples to the sending forth of the twelve. St. Matt. xx.

And now one who felt the power of the Lord words asks Him to interfere in his behalf with brother who had wronged him; Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me As if one who so boldly rebuked the hypocritical Pharisees would promptly execute judgment and justice in every case of wrong. So men appeal to God when it suits them, and for earthly gain, while in their own lives they despise His commandation.

The Lord's Kingdom was not of this world. He came not to be a judge and a divider of houses, and lands, and money; but to teach the nothingness of these things, the richness and eternity of the Heavenly reward. Therefore He spoke the parable of the Rich Fool; that men might beware of covetousness.

We see this rich man, prospering and trusting in his prosperity. It was God who had made his fields very plenteous. But the man takes it all to himself. It is "my fruits, my barns, my goods," which he will heap together, and his soul enjoy for many years in ease and merriment. So we boast in the "time of our wealth," as if these pleasant things were ours, won by our own labour, to be stored up year after year in greater abundance, to be enjoyed as long as we please, to be given to whom we will. That is man's calculation. I am rich and increased with goods. Rev. iii. 17.

How did all this end? Thou fool, this night

thy soul shall be required of thee. What were now his many years, his much goods, his plans and hopes, his boastings and pride, his ease and self-indulgence? Taken from him in a moment. Job xxi. 13. And his soul, that which was his, which was himself indeed, that the ministers of God require, unready as it is, that they may carry it before the Judge.

He was like Nabal, I Sam. xxv. II, 38, clinging to his own, suddenly taken away, not acknowledging God's gracious gifts. Deut. viii. IO—I8. Better for him to have been like David, I Chron. xxix. I4, rendering back to God of God's own, lending unto the Lord, that He might have treasure in Heaven, and be paid again full measure, running over. There is heavenly wisdom mingled with sound experience in the inscription over a rich man's tomb, which says:—

That I spent, that I had; That I saved, that I lost; That I gave, that I have.

Worldly riches are a temptation. They are also a grace. Used for ourselves, they bring to death. Sanctified to God, they become the treasure in Heaven, riches for evermore.

152. Watching and repentance. St. Luke xiii. 1-5.

T. LUKE here introduces, ch. xii. 22-59, many warnings and exhortations which the other Evangelists represent as spoken.

at separate times; the warnings against anxious thoughtfulness; the exhortations to trust in God, to heavenly-mindedness, and to watchfulness against the coming of the Lord. The uncertainty of the Master's coming proves the servant's love and obedience. The watchfulness of the servant shall be the measure of his reward. The greater the servant's knowledge, the heavier his punishment.

And the Lord's message of peace will not always bring peace. It will cause divisions in families, as well as waken enmity and persecution in the world. Happy they who can discern the signs of the times, and of the coming of that awful day! Happy they who have found deliverance from Satan, the great adversary. If the Judge condemn them and deliver them to the officer, there shall be no escape from that prison, v. 58-59.

Was it as filled with the awfulness of these thoughts—the adversary, and the suddenness of judgment, and the final doom, that some told him of the Galilæans slaughtered, at Pilate's order, at the very Altar, and of the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell? It may be so. Evidently in the minds of His informers this thought was present—that these Galilæans were thus marked as sinners beyond their brethren; as sinners on whom the adversary had come suddenly, delivering them all unprepared to the officer and the judge.

Of these Galilæans we know no more than that Pilate had them put to death, as they were offering

ifice; of the eighteen no more than that they l under some sudden accident, just as men are ed in our own time by the fall of a building, or a ery explosion, or a railway accident. By such ible strokes the public mind is awakened; the e sudden and fatal the catastrophe, the greater excitement of those who hear and speak of it. first thought of an ignorant, and inconsiderate d is that at least some who so perished must e been more than common sinners, and that ine Vengeance has smitten them thus that others r fear to do the like. They see the judgment ch fell on Sodom and Gomorrah, upon Jerusalem f, upon Gehazi, and Judas, upon Ananias and phira. They know that God will punish sin eafter, that He sometimes punishes sin suddenly signally for the warning and example of all see. And so they jump to the conclusion : all who suffer special visitation must be special This was the view of Job's friends. We e grown wiser now. We observe with a larger v and a broader experience. We see the humt, saintliest lives loaded with suffering. We see den calamity coming unawares on the righteous the wicked. God grant us to learn the lesson, to act upon it! We too may be made to er. We too may die a fearful death without a nent's warning. Not to judge others, but to be ly ourselves—that is what we learn here; ept ye repent, ve shall all likewise perish.

153. The barren figtree. St. Luke xiii. 6-9.



HE Parable of the barren fig-tree enforces the lessons of the Lord's many solemn words of warning spoken on this same day.

They who were so ready to see the Avenging Hand of Divine Wrath on the Galilæans miserably slaughtered by Pilate, must look to themselves. They have almost exhausted the Divine Mercy. St. Matt. xxiii. 32. They have the more to answer for by reason of having received so much. The Jewish Church was as a fig-tree of the Lord's planting, in His Vineyard, fenced round from wild beasts; a tree upon which the labour of the spade and the pruning knife had been richly bestowed. From such a tree the Master would naturally expect good fruit, and plenty of it. But though there was a fair shew of leaves, fruit found he none.

Year after year he came, seeking fruit; and in vain. Disappointed and vexed, he gives the word to the dresser of the vineyard. Cut it down. Why keep a tree which is not only barren itself, but sucks the juices of the earth, and casts its cold shadow, so that nothing can grow near it?

A true description of the Jewish Church for many years! Compare Isa. v. 1-7. All had been done for it which Divine Wisdom could provide. And with what result? Leaves in plenty! The washing of cups and platters, brasen vessels and tables; tithes paid of the very herbs of the garden. But

fruit? I find none. No justice, no mercy, no love of God! Worse even than mere barrenness. It cumbered the ground. It was positively mischievous. It made the Name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. Rom. ii. 24. Cut it down.

But great is the long-suffering of God. The intercessor's voice is heard, pleading for a yet further delay. Who shall this be but the very Son of God Himself? He will labour yet a little while, more abundantly than ever; by his own Ministry, His Passion, His Death. So He preached, so He suffered, and died. But, after all, the tree bore no fruit. The axe fell, and cut it down. The ruins of Jerusalem are trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

This parable the Lord repeated in action at the close of His ministry. St. Matt. xxi. 18-20. The barren figtree was cursed, and immediately it withered away. Parable, and miracle, and history too, agree terribly. As it was with Jerusalem and the Jewish Church, so it has been with branches of the Christian Church, in Asia, Rev. ii. iii., and in Africa. The like doom may fall upon Europe, upon England. Which God forbid!

And so it may be, must be, with every soul that bringeth not forth good fruit. So may it be with thy soul. Thou art God's husbandry; I Cor. iii. 9, a fig-tree planted in His vineyard. Thou hast leaves of Christian profession. What are thy fruits? He has come seeking them year after year; not these three years only. He may have

found none. He may be sparing thee yet, just this one more year, at the intercession of His dear Son. Thy Saviour, and the Holy Spirit are striving with thee, by mercies and graces unnumbered. Repent thee, then, and that soon, lest the sentence go forth finally; Cut it down, and cast it into the fire.

154. Parables. The Sower. St. Matt. xiii. 1-9.

HIS was a day of many things said and done. The Lord goes out of the Pharisee's house, and a great multitude, drawn from

every city, is gathered round Him. Seated in Peter's boat He begins to teach them many things in parables.

By the word "parable" we understand an earthly story teaching heavenly truth. This manner of instruction has always been popular in the East. Even among ourselves doctrine and precept, when simply expressed, find fewer listeners than the fable and the anecdote. For these last appeal to the imagination like a picture, shewing the beauty and reward of virtue, the foulness and punishment of vice.

We might almost say that all things in Heaven and earth are parables. All have their lesson for the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. Almost all the histories in the Old Testament may be read as parables also. Gal. iv. 24. Every type and every portion of the Jewish worship was a figure, a pattern of things in the Heavens. Heb-

Jerem. xix. I-II, many visions, Acts x. 9-16, many of the Lord's miracles were, in a sense, parables; their meaning hid from the wise and prudent, easily read by the devout and childlike spirit.

The Lord is surrounded by these simple ignorant people, who wait for His teaching. He cannot reason with them as He would with the Scribes and Pharisees. He must speak with the husbandman, the vinedresser, and the fisher, from the text book of their own experience.

The time appears to have been after the Feast of Tabernacles, in the autumn, when the fields had been cleared, and preparations already begun for the following season. The autumn sowing begins in Palestine earlier than with us. Lifting up His eyes the Divine Preacher might see some sower going forth, like Himself, to sow good seed. The field on which he sowed was of varied soil, unfenced, with a hard unbroken pathway running through it, in some parts the rock scarcely covered by the earth, in other parts carelessly cleared, so that the stumps of the brambles yet remained; elsewhere, happily for the owner, good ground The sower sows as he walks: the seed-corn falls, to take its chance. Some on the roadway, to be at once picked up by the birds; some to spring up quickly, and by reason of the shallowness of the soil, to be as quickly withered, for want of root and moisture; some, again, to give good promise by its

fair green blade, but to be overtopped by the thorns, to be starved and stunted, and overshadowed from air and sun, so as to ripen no full corn in the ear. But the rest, falling on good ground, to gladden the husbandman's heart and repay his labour, by the good fruit, thirty, sixty, an hundred fold.

It is a story of every year's experience, true to the sower and the reaper of earthly fields; true to the sower of that more precious seed which is sown in the spiritual soil, to be watched, and watered, and weeded, and kept; at last, if God shall give the increase, to be reaped unto Eternal Life.

155. The Sower. St. Matt. xiii. 18-23; St. Luke viii. 11-18.

O this parable of the sower the Lord added others, all bearing upon the Kingdom of Heaven, the planting and growth of His

Church. When He had sent the multitudes away, the disciples came asking Him His reasons for speaking in parables; and also the explanation of these which He had spoken to-day.

The parable of the sower is more fully explained by our Lord than any other. He goes into every point, shewing how exactly the preaching of His Gospel corresponds with the sowing of the seed.

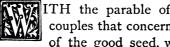
The sower goes forth to sow, even as the Lord Himself, and His ministers after Him. The seed is the word of God, good seed, well sown. There is no fault there. The fault is in the soil, which is not all of the same quality. So do the hearts of the hearers vary. The seed falls, first, by the wayside, on the outward ear merely, without being received inwardly into the heart. For the heart has never been prepared for receiving. The sermon is heard, and ended. The hearer passes from the Church. He is not even at the pains to cover the seed sown with a single serious thought. And the devil blots it out of his memory before he has reached his home. Again, the seed falls, on rocky ground, on the hasty impulsive nature which promises so well, but is too shallow to persevere in performance. It springs up immediately, in delighted acceptance, in restless desire, and eager beginnings. But there is no depth of character, no root. The hot sun beats down with a sharp word, a teasing jest, a scornful smile, a little weariness and painfulness, a temptation to sinful pleasure. By and by they are offended. For awhile—that is the character here. They cannot endure. They have soon given up. Again, the seed falls upon a better soil, where it gives better promise. It takes root downwards, and shoots upwards. But other things are growing up too, the forgotten roots of worldly cares and riches, the poor man's anxieties and the rich man's pleasures. The young shoots would do well if they were not hindered thus. Short prayers, harassed minds, the imperfect preparation, Communion neglected, duties acknowledged, intended, and in the end left undone, worldly-mindedness instead of heavenly-mi ness, this is the seed among thorns. Choked unfruitful!

Has not the Great Sower cause to wee these? Have not His ministers, the labourers harvest field, cause to grieve over too man hear and do not! But, God be thanked, are not all. There is yet good ground waiting the good seed, the honest and good heart, pre not only to receive but to keep and to of perfect and to multiply unto the full ripenes

What must we do then, that we may be among these last? We must begin by prepa of the heart, that the word we hear may fir trance, and be kept from the evil spirits that take it away. It is not enough to hear the gladly, or to rush into works of charity and tion, or to live the fair outside life. Prepa attention, remembrance and meditation, fit solve and steadfast doing, this is what the Lo the Harvest looks for. This is the good fruit, ri in full abundance, which shall be found wor be gathered into the Heavenly Garner.

Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.

156. The secret Growth; the Mustard See Leaven. St. Mark iv. 26-33; St. Matt. xiii. 3



ITH the parable of the Sower St. couples that concerning the secret & of the good seed, which in its lesson

responds with those of the Mustard Seed and the Herein we are taught the difference between God's ways and man's ways. Men are always seeking after signs and proofs. They cannot They doubt and disbelieve where they cannot see and understand. Thus the Pharisees asked when the Kingdom of God should come. thinking that it should immediately be manifested. St. Luke xvii. 20; xix. 11. They were studying and expecting, laying down the conditions of the time, and place, and manner, of Christ's coming. And lo! Christ, whom they were expecting stood before them. His Kingdom was among them. Therefore now in the earlier, as well as afterwards in the later, portion of His ministry, the Lord speaks parables of instruction concerning the secret workings of Divine Providence, Power, and Grace. The Kingdom of God was not to come with observation The seed sown by the Heavenly Sower should grow silently, steadily, day and night, into the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear; unmarked by men; until suddenly, immediately, the reapers should appear to gather in the harvest. The one tiny seed the least that men cared to sow for a crop, should grow on and on, until it became a tree, affording shelter to the birds which would have devoured it up at the beginning. The little lump of leaven, hid in three measures of meal, lost to sight and taste in the mass, should work until its influence had pervaded the whole, making every portion to

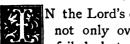


dred fold. St. John xii. 24. The tiny Chone crucified Lord with the few disciples an upper chamber for fear of the Jews, xx. 19, like one small seed hid in the eart grow into a tree, and wax strong, reach heaven, and to the ends of the earth, till enemies should seek shelter under her Dan. iv. 11–12. The doctrine and mind a hidden by the Church in the mass of the was some might imagine, sure to be lost the preserve its power, should give instead of a until it had leavened the whole. The wor some day awake and find itself Christian

God works in the same secret way in vidual soul. The Spirit of God shall be s hidden in the heart. We must not expect and startling conversions. God can work

being inwardly changed from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18, until he has grown into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Eph. iv. 13.

157. The Wheat and the Tares. St. Matt. xiii. 24-30; 36-43.



N the Lord's corn fields we have to lament not only over the good seed which has failed, but over the weeds which are

mingled with the wheat. There is a sower of evil seed as well as of good corn.

This form of malice is found even now in Eastern countries. An enemy will cast in the bad seed, which ripens and seeds itself before the harvest of the good crop; so that the owner is tormented for years by the mischievous weed. It is the same in the Kingdom of God. The field is the world, the Church upon earth, sown by the Son of Man with the children of the Kingdom. But His enemy, the devil, came with envy, sowing tares, even the children of the wicked one.

Our English version speaks of tares, a very different plant from wheat. But St. Matthew's word signifies a tall grass, in the early blade scarcely to be distinguished from wheat. It was only when the wheat was in the ear that the servants perceived the mischief that had been done. How true is this to the reality! At the first this bad seed grows around us unsuspected, like unto good very often. It is only as the characters ripen that the good fruit of the full ear is distinguished from the badness of the empty husk. Then arises the cry of wonder—" How comes it that sin, and evil, and misery, have found root in the world which God made so good, in the Church which Christ hath sown with the children of His Father?"

A great question! How is it that there is evil in the world, evil in the Church? Is this the Church which hath neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing? Eph. v. 27. The answer is—The enemy hath done this. Wisdom ii. 53-24.

And then follows that second, scarcely less important, question-Should not the Lord's servants so bear rule and exercise discipline in the Church, as to root up and cast out these children of the wicked one? It is a question to which some would reply—"Most certainly." For the loving heart is jealous for its Lord's honour, and for the purity of His Church: is careful for the souls of others and for its own: and would therefore cast out everything that can offend. And the Scripture tells us, Put away from among yourselves that wicked person. I Cor. v. 13; Ps. i. I. Nevertheless such attempts at wholesale separation have always failed of the end sought. The purest human society, however carefully weeded, will soon have its tares springing up. And who are we that we should judge which is the true wheat and which the false? Who are we that we dare say of the false wheat that it may not, under the gracious rain and sunshine,

hange its nature, and bring forth good fruit in the end? In the visible Church evil must ever be mingled with the good; such is God's will, for His own vise purposes. I Cor. xi. 19. There is One only hat can judge without erring. St. James iv. 12. Let is labour, rather, for the conversion of the sinner. Both must grow together until the harvest. Then shall be the separation, the wicked gathered together to be consumed; the righteous shining forth in the manifestation of the sons of God, in the glory of their Father. Rom. viii. 19.

158. The hid Treasure, the Pearl, the Net. St. Matt. xiii. 44-50.



UT the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be looked at in one light only. It has its types everywhere, according as we regard

it in its hidden working, its vast increase, its penetrating and leavening influence, and now in its preciousness. It is like Treasure hid in a field, like a Pearl of great price. Richness and beauty are its marks in these two parables. Yet there is an important difference in the detail. The Treasure is hidden in a field. And it is this field which the finder purchases at the cost of all that he has. What, therefore, is the field?

Surely nothing but the Church itself, the Church with her Creeds and Scripture, her ministry of the Word and Sacraments, her glorious worship, and her sweet Communion with her Lord; the Church

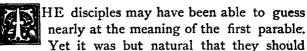
which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filled bery all in all. Eph. i. 23. In the Church, if anywher, thave the searching soul may find Christ. Some with the his warn us against our spiritual Mother, as it is not to would turn us away from the true riches; as it is not loving and valuing her, we should cease to love the control of the christ, was not possible except by the directlifting and up of our own soul to Him, apart from all helpard agency of man. But what then means this parable to be The man bought the treasure in buying the field for So he who has the Church has Christ. Happy they who, after their long seeking, have found the treasure; and who have gladly sold all that they had, their old false hopes and confidences, their false doctrines and heresies, that they might buy that Field which holds the Treasure! Phil. iii. 4-II.

The Field will signify the Church, the witness and keeper of the Truth. The One Goodly Pearl of Price will rather signify the Truth itself. There are many seeking pearls; too sad and painstaking to be content with less than goodly ones. For, says St. Augustine, "Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself, and our heart must ever continue restless until it have found rest in Thee." Happy he who perseveres until he shall find that One Pearl of great price, the goodliest of all! who can recognize its goodliness and price above all poor and imperfect specimens! who will go and sell all that he has to make it his own!

Observe that in these two parables the Kingdom of Heaven is something to be found by a man and made his own; something which he prizes and clings to as a precious possession. This sense of ownership is a part of Christian life. Until we can love Christ as dear to us, and precious, yea, as the very life itself, our love is imperfect.

Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a net. For the Apostles were to be fishers of men, to bring in such as they should find, to cast the Gospel-net around all, bad as well as good. A further instance of the mixture of the evil with the good, which shall be to the end of time! Then shall come the separation, the reward and the punishment. We are in the Gospel-net of the Church now. But that is not enough. Where shall we be when the wicked shall be severed from among the just?

159. The Seeing and the Blinded. St. Matt. xiii. 10-17; 34-35; 51-52.



desire an interpretation from the lips of the speaker. As soon, then, as He had sent the multitudes away, they ask why He has spoken to them in parables. The answer is a terrible one. It shews us the Divine Wisdom looking into the hearts of the Jewish rulers and teachers, perceiving their wilful blindness, and framing His lessons accordingly, so

as to withhold from them the light which they had so long and obstinately rejected.

The parable was a form of teaching requiring the attention and thought of the disciple. It did not state a truth plainly and simply. It rather covered it with a light veil; sufficient to attract the enquiring and teachable mind, encouraging it to seek and find for itself the half hidden beauty. To the disciples, therefore, it was given to know the more secret doctrines of the Kingdom of Heaven. To the Jewish rulers it was not given. For they were unworthy. Their little light was already fading out. Their day of visitation was darkening to its close.

Yet in this there was no new punishment. They were only fulfilling against themselves the prophecy of Isaiah, ch vi. 9; working out against themselves one of God's eternal laws, that continued obstinate resistance to grace must end in hopeless blindness and insensibility. This continued resistance comes nearest of any to the unpardonable sin, so far as we may dare to speak. This certainly is a sin against the Holy Ghost. Therefore the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, because Pharaoh had himself first hardened it. Exod. xi. 9-10. Therefore the Pharisees could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes. St. John xii. 39-41. They could not, because they would not. God willeth not that any should perish. Ezek. xviii. 23. 32. Yet if man wills not to be saved, how shall even Almighty Love and Power him? For salvation is the knowledge of ist. And this knowledge the Jewish rulers ld not receive.

ut the blessing is upon these lowly ones who receiving, and keeping, and doing the word. sed are their eyes and ears! For they see and what the ancient Saints desired in vain, and only by faith and afar off, through a glass and tly, as Abraham and Isaiah. St. John viii. 56; It. Blessed they, in that they saw and heard the d's Christ! Blessed we, no less, in that, 1gh we have not seen, we have believed!

1 His teaching He has brought out of His sure things new and old. Let this be a pattern hem. The New Covenant is the fulfilment of Old; the wisdom of the ancients may be used hrow light on the doctrines of the Christian rch. So shall the ancient gold become thrice red, more and more beautiful in its new design more perfect workmanship.

The would-be disciples. St. Luke viii. 22; ix. 57-62.

HE latter parables, with the explanation, had been spoken to the disciples by themselves, in the house. St. Matt. xiii. 36. The d would now cross to the other side of the Sea Falilee, on this same evening. St. Mark iv. 35. he passes from the house to the boat a man s forth from the crowd, and asks permission to

follow Him. It is one of the Scribes, apparently throwing away the prejudice of his class, and coming forward openly. Is not this, at last, the triumph of Meekness and Truth, the beginning of a happier time?

Yet the offer is not accepted. The Son of Man, knowing his heart, points to His own hard and homeless life. Will this would-be disciple be content to share so poor a lot, to hunger and thirst, to be naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place? 2 Cor. iv. 11. He is neither encouraged nor rejected. He must count the cost for himself. Did he ever become a disciple? It would seem not.

Another steps forward, as if accepting these conditions. His service is accepted. Follow Me. But before He leaves all, he has one office of affection to perform. Suffer me first to go and bury my father. Some think that the father was not already dead, and that the son was asking permission to soothe the declining days of an aged parent. Either way, the request was not the forsaking all which the Lord requires of His disciples. They that are Christ's must be ready, when called, to do as He had done, even to the leaving father and mother. There are enough, the Lord says, dead to the things of Eternal Life. Let these dead bury the dead corpse. I call thee to preach My Kingdom. Did he go? We know not.

A third is more ready still. One word of farewell to his friends will content him. Surely he lay say as much as that. No, not even that is lowed when Jesus has called us to immediate ervice. The sight of a beloved home, the remonrances of friends, the "second thoughts" apart om the gracious influences of the Presence of esus, might detain, or hold him back altogether. Iot even a look back is permitted. Gen. xix. 17. That apostle, whose wrench was perhaps by far the nost painful of all in his following Jesus, conferred ot with flesh and blood, Gal. 1. 16; but forgetting hose things which were behind, he pressed forward. Thil. iii. 13–14; Ps. xlv. 11.

All are willing, yet all hold back. They are ttracted by the hope of His Kingdom and Glory, by admiration of His Power, by love of His word, and of Himself. In this spirit many, in all times, after to follow Him. Then He shews them His Cross. If any man wills to come after Me, let him ake up his Cross, and follow Me. At this they linch, and draw back. They would give Him a part. He must have all. Nothing may come between us and our Lord, not the dearest of relations, not even our own life. St. Matt. x. 38-39. If we wen look back, we are not worthy of Him, or fit or His Kingdom.

He has called thee. Art thou following? If not—what holds thee back? Sacrifice it to Him it once, and entirely. He will restore it to thee an nundred fold, with everlasting life. And His promise fandeth sure.

161. The Tempest Stilled. St. Mark iv. 36-41.



HEY now launch forth to cross the Sea of Galilee. And He, after His day of working and teaching, is glad to lay His weary

Head on such a pillow as the rough fishing boat can furnish, there to snatch an hour's sleep. A sudden storm sweeps down upon them from the hills—a very common occurrence on this as on all inland seas, and the cause of innumerable accidents; the waves are beating into the ship so that it is already full. It is a critical moment. The terrified disciples find their skill and their strength of no avail. And He is sleeping.

He sleeps, but His heart waketh. Cant. v. 2. He knoweth their fears. But He would prove them whether they can trust Him. They awake Him with the agonized cry of fear and faith, Master, Lord, save us, we perish. One word from His lips, spoken as to the evil spirits whom God had permitted to vex the world—Peace, be still! Immediately the wind ceased; immediately there was a great calm. Just as when He rebuked the fever, St. Luke iv. 39, and it left the sick woman; and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

With the deliverance rebuke is mingled. They ought to have known by this time that where Christ is, there the disciple is safe; they ought to have had faith in His love and power. Great as is their thankfulness, their deepest feeling is wonder.

The cure of disease was in some sort a more perfect exercise of that healing power possessed by skilful and experienced men. The casting out of evil spirits was not so entirely strange to them. But the immediate obedience of winds and waves was far beyond any thing they had heard or imagined. What manner of man is this? This is the Lord's doing. Ps. lxxxix. 9-10.

It was indeed a special miracle, one which could not fail to strike the hearts of these fishermen with wonder and awe. Jesus, wearied out, had sought refreshment in slumber, a feeble man, feebler than themselves. Yet, one word from Him, and the mighty tempest has become a great calm. Surely this is He of whom Solomon asked, Proverbs xxx. 4; this is He of whom Isaiah spoke, ch. xl. 12; the Creator and Lord of wind and wave.

And is not this also a parable? Is not the ship the Church? Once when the tempest beat against it, He was asleep, in the sleep of death; put to death in the flesh, but alive in the spirit, I St. Peter iii. 18; even then binding the disturber, and making a great calm. And, since then, the powers of the devil and of the world have continually raised the storm of winds and waves against this ship, and it has seemed all but lost. Yet He has been within her; asleep, as her enemies thought and unable to help. But they have thought wrongly, and their triumph has been but short lived. He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

He has risen in His calm glory and power. His word has stilled her enemies into immediate calm. And as long as He is in the ship—and that is, according to His promise, even unto the end—He will arise at the cry of the disciples, and in their sorest need will make a great calm.

162. The demoniacs among the Gadarenes. St. Mark v. 1-20.



RRIVED at the further shore, the country of the Gergesenes or Gadarenes, the Lord and His disciples are met by two possessed

with evil spirits. St. Matthew speaks of two, the other Evangelists of one, as if this one were the fiercer, and stronger, and better known. These men were the terror of their neighbourhood, threatening and ill-treating all who came in their way.

But their violence is stilled as they stand in the presence of Him who had but just now hushed with a word the strife of wind and wave. They quail before Him and acknowledge His power, kneeling and worshipping as He bids the unclean spirit to come out.

This miracle brings out, even more distinctly than that recorded in St. Mark i. 21, the frightful condition of such sufferers. They are possessed—not by devils, for there is but one *Devil*, Satan, the Prince of the rebellious angels, but—by lower spirits of evil, by demons. They have lost all self-control, and go about naked, shrieking, self-torturing body

and soul. Moreover the man and the demons are so confused, that when the man replies to the Lord's question, the demons answer by him. My name is Legion, a regiment; for we are many. They know Him. They acknowledge His power. They know too what must be their punishment at last. And they entreat Him that He will not, in releasing the poor sufferer, cast them out before their time into the deep, that everlasting prison prepared for them and for their master. Rev. xx. 10.

What should this mean but that their liberty depends upon their having some unhappy creature in possession; that, departing from one house, they must quickly find another, or be driven to their own place in the pit? They ask, and are suffered, to go into a herd of swine feeding near. See now how the cunning of the evil spirits outwits itself. The terrified swine forthwith rush down the slope into the sea, and are drowned. The demons are, through their own craftiness, homeless, cast out into the deep which they dreaded, their powers of ill against mankind ended for ever.

News of this is carried by the astonished swineherds into the city; and the people, flocking out, find him that had been possessed sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed now, and in his right mind. Will they not quickly bring to Him all their sick for healing? Will they not also sit at His feet, and hear His word? Oh, strange request! They besought Him to depart. They are afraid of Him that casteth out devils.

Their request was granted, to their own great loss. They were not ripe for His coming. They see in Him one who has interfered with their worldly prosperity, who may bring further ruin upon them. So the world will not have Christ. So the sinner will not listen to the voice of the Spirit of God. They would rather have their swine safe, even though a fellow creature were left in bondage to the devil. But the man himself-he at any rate will be with Jesus. He begs, as they return to their boat, to be allowed to accompany his benefactor. Yet his request is refused. We wonder. Christ, who calls us to forsake all and follow Him, sends this man back. Yes, because He does not call all men after the same manner. I Cor. vii. 7. Some are called to be apostles and ministers of the Church: others are left to tell in their own homes what great things God hath done for them. I Cor. xii. 28-31. How else indeed could His will be known, and His Church be filled. if it were not by the quiet ministry of home life? If Christ have blessed thee by the casting out of any evil spirit, if He have brought thee, clothed and in a right mind, to sit at His feet and learn of Him do not be troubled if He leave thee where thou art. Tell thou to thine own friends what He has done for thy soul. Perchance those who would beseech Jesus to depart out of their coasts, may listen to thee, and receive Him when He comes again.

- 163. The feast at Levi's house. St. Luke v. 29-39.

HE evil spirits being cast out, the Lord's work among the Gadarenes was done. He had granted their request that He would depart from among them, and returned at once across the lake to His own city, Capernaum. There He is welcomed by an expectant multitude.

It is the city of one of His disciples also, Levi, or Matthew, the tax-gatherer. Levi seizes the double opportunity of doing honour to his Lord, and gathering his friends and neighbours together to hear His Word. He hopes that they may soon be almost and altogether such as he is. The house is filled with guests, a great company of Publicans, and others of notoriously careless life. The house and its hospitality are open to all who choose to enter. And the Scribes and Pharisees are there, as usual ever ready to find fault. The sight is almost as galling to them as was His acceptance of the sinful woman's service. They go to the disciples, half in scorn, half as it were to set them against their Master: -Why eateth He with publicans and sinners? Not yet did they understand Him and His work, that He came to save sinners. Where should the Physician be, but among the sick? The worse the disease, the greater their need of Him. All religious observances, good as they were, must spring from the compassionate heart, else they were nothing. Ps. li. 16-19; St. James i. 27. The selfrighteous must not blame Him if He goes where His rebuke is humbly taken, His instruction attentively obeyed.

The Pharisees continue their fault-finding, and bring some of John the Baptist's disciples to support them. They want to know why He and His disciples neglect the ancient rule of fasting, observed by the Pharisees and sanctioned by John the Baptist for his followers.

It is one of their many cunning questions which only Divine Wisdom could understand and meet. He answers that fasting is the expression of sorrow, not befitting the days of the marriage feast. the Bridegroom, was as yet with His disciples; therefore they might, and must, rejoice. disciples of John would remember their master's words. St. John iii. 29. The time would come soon: enough for sorrow and for fasting. Thus, without offending John's disciples, but rather shewing His sympathy with them in their master's imprisonment, He excuses Himself. Then He continues in pa-The newly woven, undressed, harsh cloth can never match with the old. It will not give and yield, but tears away the other, and the garment is destroyed. The new unfermented wine must not be put into old skins. Else the strong working will burst the old weak skins, and the wine is lost New and old do not agree. The Gospel is as the new cloth, and the new wine, Zech. ix. 17, and the disciples are not yet strong enough to sustain its

shall make them new, they shall be sufficient for these harder things. St. John xvi. 12.

St. Luke alone adds that no man chooses the new wine in preference to the old; that is, that they who had been so long used to the Law would naturally be unwilling at the first to exchange it for the new covenant of the Gospel.

164. The raising of 'Fairus' daughter. St. Mark v. 22-24, 35-43.

ARDLY has Jesus declared Himself the good Physician than His aid is required in an extreme case. Jairus, a ruler of the

Synagogue at Capernaum, has entreated Him to go and heal his only daughter who even now lay in the death-agony. Almost certainly Jairus had been among these who sought the aid of Jesus for the Centurion's servant. St. Luke vii. 3. He is now pleading in his own affliction.

And the Lord goes with him; not now, as before, speaking the word only. Perhaps for the sake of those about Him, lest they should imagine that He spared Himself labour, and was unwilling to be interrupted in his repose, or his meals. Perhaps foreseeing the other sufferer who should come for healing.

On the way He is detained by the poor afflicted woman, who sought and won healing by a touch.

A sore trial to the agonized father. Every moment

was precious! What if they arrived too late? This Jesus who had healed so many sick, could he also raise the dead? His fears are realized. Messengers meet him; All is over. Thy daughter is dead now. Trouble not the master.

Then shone forth the tender pity of the Lord. Their faith had failed them. The father's faith might fail too, if it were not quickly supported. As soon as Fesus heard the word that was spoken, He saith, Be not afraid. Only believe.

They reach the house, and the three favoured disciples only are allowed to enter, Peter, James, and John, they who alone were admitted spectators of His glory and His agony. St Matt. xvii. 2; xxvi. 37. He is standing over the corpse, and again words of encouragement and comfort fall from His lips.

She is not dead, but sleepeth! As He said also of Lazarus. For death is but a sleep, from which the voice of the Son of Man shall raise up all at the last day. St. John v. 25. And her awakening was not to be so long delayed. The hired mourners, with their long experience of death, laugh Him to scorn. He puts them out; first, because as mourners for the dead they are not wanted there; secondly, because He will not work His greatest works before profane eyes. Deepest mysteries are only for reverent and humble hearts. Not what we see and hear is truth, but the word of Christ. The word of God the Son makes things

to be that which He says they are. His touch upon the dead hand, His word in the dead ear, Talitha Cumi—the echo of the tender Hebrew words with which her mother's voice had so often awakened her—and her spirit came again from the kingdoms of the departed. She arose and walked.

And He commanded that food should be given her, lest the parents, in their excess of astonishment, should forget her weakness. For the restored life was yet feeble. And He, having done what man could not do, now makes way for the offices of human strength and love. The Providence of God will not sustain life by miracle, when food and drink may be had. The manna ceased as soon as Israel entered the land of promise. Josh. v. 12. And as with the body so with the soul. He that gave thee the new life of thy soul has commanded His Church, which is thy spiritual mother, to feed thee with the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation.

If thou wilt not eat and drink thereof, thou must not expect Him to sustain thee by any fresh miracle of life from the dead.

165. The Issue of Blood stanched. St. Mark v. 25-34.

S the anxious father was hurrying Jesus to the healing of his daughter a serious interruption and delay had occurred; a delay,

and yet, as it turned out, a mighty encouragement.

Partly for Jesus' sake, partly for Jairus', a great crowd was following. Suddenly the Lord stops, turns, and asks, as one might do who had been insulted or hurt, 'Who touched my clothes?' No one will confess to having done so. The disciples argue, very reasonably, that He has been touched not by one but by many in this surging, swaying crowd. That was not what He meant. There are touches which are no touches, even as there is seeing without sight. A touch of faith there had been, drawing forth from Him the power of healing.

The multitude learn that a great miracle has been silently worked. Presently a poor frail woman came forward, one in whose face were traced the lines of long disease. Trembling, and kneeling at His feet, she told her sad and grateful story; how she had suffered for twelve long years, and had sought help at the cost of all her living, but only with increased suffering; how she had heard of Him, and His works of healing, and had said within herself, 'If I may but touch His clothes, I shall be whole;' how she had thought to steal the blessing; and how, only touching the border of His garment, she had indeed won the healing of her plague.

And what is His treatment of her? Will he not chide her for the dishonour she has done Him, treating Him as one who knew no more than He saw? Has He not turned and dragged her forward for a public rebuke? No. He has drawn her to Him for the perfecting of her faith, that she may

carry away a blessing for soul as well as for body. She knows Him now, the Searcher of hearts. She may go in peace. Her faith hath made her whole.

Look on her as a type of the sinner, sore diseased, seeking a cure in vain from earthly wisdom, spending and suffering only to be worse. But look also upon her quickness and courage when she has heard of Jesus. A woman, friendless and so feeble, she yet makes her way into the crowd, to steal a blessing! What perfect faith in His power to heal, though her understanding was so faulty!

Two lessons are ours from this. The first, that salvation depends not upon knowledge, but upon faith. After all it is little that the wisest of us knows of the great mystery of godliness. And many a poor soul knows less than we do. Much of faith is what might be called ignorant, superstitious faith. It goes to get a blessing, seeing very dimly, or not at all, how that blessing passes from the Saviour to itself. Nevertheless He pities and encourages, and accepts the ignorant faith. He confirms the blessing. Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

And secondly; that even the touching of Christ is nothing without faith. When He was on earth many touched Him, and yet touched Him not. Some touched Him indeed, only to do Him dishonour, and to their own condemnation. So it is now. We may eat His Body and drink His Blood

in the Blessed Sacrament, and yet in no wa partakers of Christ. Better for us to believe out understanding, and to get the healing, the understand, and yet to have no faith, and so t of His favour here, and His reward here. Too often we despise our brother for his igno and superstition—as we call it,—when he, i darkness, by faith has won a blessing which have never sought, or have sought in vain.

These two signal miracles in one day are foll by others, the giving of sight to two blind and the casting out of a dumb spirit. And the Pharisees repeat their blasphemous objethat He is in league with Satan. St. Matt. x

With this the Lord's second circuit the Galilee was ended, and he returned to his country of Nazareth. St. Mark vi. 1.













